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THE
GAMESTERS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

THE
GAMSTER



IN THE VOLUME

VOL. II

THE
GAMESTERS:
A NOVEL.
IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHORESS OF
BURTON-WOOD AND JOSEPH.

V O L. II.

Good unexpected, evil unforeseen,
Appear, by turns, as fortune shifts the scene;
Some, rais'd aloft, come tumbling down amain,
Then fall so hard, they bound and rise again.

DRYDEN'S VIRGIL.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED BY H. D. STEEL, N^o. 51, LOTHBURY,
AND SOLD BY
R. BALDWIN, N^o. 47, PATER-NOSTER-ROW.
M,DCC.LXXXVI.

THE
GAMMESTERS
A NOVEL
IN THREE VOLUMES.

By the Author of
BURTON-WOOD AND JOSEPH.



Good readers,
Appear, by the force
of the mind, and
Then fall to hand, they bound and the again.
Dey's own's fiction.

LONDON:
Printed at H. E. STEEL, No. 7, Tottenham Court Road.
AND SOLD BY
R. BALDWIN, No. 47, Paternoster Row.
MDCCLXXXVI.

T. H. E.
GAMESTERS.

Mrs. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

Jan. 3.

OUR ruin is complete, sister. — Oh! my oppressed heart! — My afflicted husband! — Patience, great God! — Our situation is dreadful; for we have an *execution* in the house.

It is night, and all is quiet. My dear Edward has lost the remembrance of his calamity in a serene sleep. I will now endeavour to give you the particulars of those shocking events, which for the present render repose to me useless. My husband entered the room where I was writing. He looked gloomy, pensive,

VOL. II.

A

even

even wretched. With much difficulty I convinced him of my innocence respecting the bishop's letter. At length "I believe you, Frances," he said, "with that open countenance and ingenuous mind, hypocrisy and deceit must ever be at variance. Forgive my ungenerous suspicions, they do but display in brighter colours your amiable sincerity."

"You look heavy and spiritless, my love. Why this chagrin?"

"Ask not the cause, my lovely wife. True, I am spiritless."

He turned aside; and, from his accent, I was convinced the dear Edward was *unmanned*, as it is often falsely called. — I took his arm, and sought the reluctant eye. He wept.

"There is a reason, Edward, for this dejection. Have you any confidence in Frances Wilmot? Is not her bosom the repository of your secrets? You own it."

“ it. Conceal not then the cause of that
“ distress which speaks in every word and
“ action !”

He sighed ; nay, almost groaned. “ Must
“ I tell the sole possessor of my heart that
“ she — that she is — no longer mistress
“ of these stately apartments ? That the
“ days of grandeur are fled ? And that—
“ we must soon remove to an obscure
“ dwelling. — Oh ! Frances,” and his
head sunk upon my shoulder, as he leant
upon the elbow of my chair, close to
which he sat. — “ Oh ! Frances, there
“ is *one* only hope, — *one* resource left.
“ — And how can I ask a tender wife to
“ comply with that which must leave her
“ nearly destitute ?

I was petrified. — Shed no tears. —
Spoke not. — Louisa, the affair needed
no explanation. It was my marriage set-
tlement he wanted. That alone could
silence the usurious and gambling cre-
ditor.

My husband seemed in agonies. Ought I not to lessen them? O what pangs tormented my mind. Sir Henry, — Ingram, — Ward. — How I silently execrated those destroyers of our felicity. Have they not brought misery upon the dearest of mankind? — Reduced him to the mortification of seeking relief from the woman he had raised from almost nothing? These reflections, conclusive though poignant, brought me to speech and action. I arose, went to my cabinet, took out the deed which secured to me a liberal annuity, and, offering it to Wilmot, tears nearly preventing utterance, — “Take, dearest Edward, your own; and, for *once*, let your Frances exult in the power of giving pleasure to her afflicted husband.”

He looked at me, — cast his eyes upwards, — then at the paper which I still held, — and with a rejecting motion of his hand, signified his refusal of my offer.

— “What,”

— “What,” said he, — “*take that deed!*
“ — Deprive you of affluence, of comfort,
“ — of the means of future subsistence?
“ — No; I detest such baseness. Be-
“ cause heaven has bestowed an angel
“ upon me, shall I render myself totally
“ unworthy of the blessing?”

“ It is *yours*, Wilmot. — Do not dis-
“ tress me by farther altercation; it *must*
“ be useful. Your hint was not lost.”

“ I did express a wish, indeed. But
“ recollection banishes selfishness. Your
“ generous behaviour, my Frances, in-
“ tirely precludes the least desire to ob-
“ tain that bounty, nay, totally forbids
“ acceptance.”

We were interrupted in the tender argu-
ment by our father's presence. He en-
tered to take unwelcome leave. His er-
rand changed the subject of my tears, and
they now streamed for the departure of
that beloved parent. I left him with my
husband, who mentioned the cause of our

melancholy contest, — Louisa, *that* deed will be necessary to the arrangement of Edward's affairs, and he *shall* have it. . .

Soon after my father's departure, I was summoned to dinner. Passing through the hall, I observed several rough but decent looking men talking to the porter at the front door. The servant appeared confused. I heard him say — “ You had
“ better call to-morrow morning — as
“ my master is just going to dinner.”

“ Please to tell Mr. Wilmot we *must*
“ see *him* now. Our business can't be put
“ off.”

My husband heard them and went into the hall; they entered, and the genteelest of them presented a paper. Edward read it, and, with apparent tranquility, begged they would follow the servant to a room appropriated for transacting matters with common people. He went with me into the parlour, and, in the gentlest manner, broke the cause of their coming.

Sister,

Sister, it was to enter the execution I mentioned. The detestable Ingram had done it without any other previous notice than a messenger sent by a lawyer, demanding immediately a complete settlement. — The sudden shock overcame me. I fainted; and, as soon as my senses were restored, begged, nay insisted, in the most persuasive, and I believe positive terms, to give up the settlement. Poor Wilmot refused, and still refuses, resolved to do nothing till to-morrow. — Oh! Louisa what to-morrow may produce I know not.

Mrs. WILMOT in continuation.

Jan. 4.

WE have had an interview with our oppressor, and he has explained the cause of this precipitate cruelty. It was late this morning when we met at breakfast, which was not over before Ingram and another person were announced. My husband's

yes sparkled with disdain at their entrance. I felt myself hurt, but was determined, if possible, to be present at the issue of their visit. They refused chocolate, which was slightly offered. The usurer cast a greedy look upon an elegant cady that stood on the table, surveying it with much significance. He then gazed at the furniture, winking upon his companion to notice what he particularly singled out. He took a cup in his hand, awkwardly admiring the rich pattern, but evidently not knowing how to explain the errand he came upon. Edward seemed resolved not to speak. I had neither inclination nor ability to open a conversation which must be undoubtedly disagreeable to both of us. After several fruitless attempts, Ingram broke the strange silence. "I suppose, " Mr. Wilmot, you didn't expect I shou'd " be so hasty in this affair. But, to say " the truth, I heard a bird sing as how, " if Sir Henry died before I was secure, " I might

“ I might be choused out of my own. —
“ And he has put me off a heap of times ;
“ and so I was determined to get my
“ money, by fair or foul means, as the
“ saying is.—And now I’m come to know
“ what you means for to do.”

“ What do *you* mean to do ?” replied
my husband, with a haughty air.

“ Why, I means to be paid, certain-
“ ly.”

“ By my honour, you have taken a
“ most effectual method. — Entered an
“ execution for £14000 before I had
“ answered your hasty demand. Pray in-
“ form me what you farther expect.”

“ Expects,—Why I expects you shou’d
“ lay down £7000 directly, and give
“ sufficient security for the remainder.”

“ But I cannot command such a sum
“ immediately.”

“ Oh! you mus’nt tell me that. I
“ knows better things. Part with all
“ these here fine gimcracks and them
“ there

“there fallals;” pointing to a side-board of plate. — (We were in the dining-parlour) “I warrants if you looks sharp “the thing may be done yet.”

I had scarcely patience to sit, and dreaded the consequence of Mr. Wilmot’s rising anger. — Ingram went on. — “Why “there now — pray what’s the use of all “this flourigig nonsense?” — Taking hold of a silver epergne. “Will you “pretend for to say a man can’t dine “without sich a gewgaw troublesome “thing as this upon his table?”

Edward seemed inattentive, just then, to this vulgar impudent harangue, deeply musing, and looking earnestly at the window. The wretch continued, “Will you “be pleased for to say what you intends “to do? — Sir Henry tould me what a “fulky man I shou’d have to deal with. “—That is — ods bobs — I don’t know — “what

“ what I’m a talking of. — But no matter, if you can’t raise the wind, why
“ Mr. Girandole, you must e’en take an
“ inventory of all the goods, I thinks,
“ and the sooner the better; I supposes
“ Mr. Wilmot won’t have no objection
“ to that. Come, where’s your book? I
“ wants to be at shop.”

“ Be it so, then,” said my husband, starting up. — “ Come, Frances, with me.
“ I expect two gentlemen presently, who
“ will settle with Mr. Ingram.”

We left them, and agreed to leave Portland-Place to-morrow, and retire, for the present, to a little rural dwelling we have at Norwood.

Louisa, I call upon you to admire my fortitude. Do me the justice to confess that prosperity has not so enervated your sister, but that her spirit can yet sustain the severe blast of adversity. I will not suffer you to shed *one* tear. — We may be
happy

happy (when custom has reconciled the change) without a luxuriant superfluity, we were *not* so *with it*. See the effect of our beloved father's letters! — And what is there in this alteration, striking as it may appear, to embitter the hours of youth and health? It is true, the sumptuous drawing-room is wanting. The stately saloon and the rest of that elegant suite of apartments, the contemplation of which used to delight the giddy and to torment the envious, are now no more our own. But why repine? O that Edward would think as I do; would but accommodate his spirit to our circumstances. Alas! he is more melancholy than before. My cheerful prattle cannot raise one smile, nor the most sedulous endeavours to amuse, banish the frown of discontent from his brow. Perhaps he may be more easy when the worst is past.

Mr. Morris and Mr. Hartley, two distant cousins of my husband's, have engaged

gaged to settle matters with Ingram. They came this morning. Edward was strolling in the wood. I dare not tell him their business, and dread his seeing a newspaper; for, sister, our furniture is to be sold without reserve. Do not mind the blistered paper. — Only an ebb of fortitude.

How is the dear valetudinarian? Has the journey affected him much? I wish to hear his health has not suffered by travelling, at this frigid season of the year. Good soul! I often think of his distressful countenance, when Edward, upon a considerable loss at whist, threw the cards from him. — Oh! that was a horrid night! Adieu, my love. FRANCES WILMOT.

The Rev. Mr. JENKINS to Mrs. WILMOT,

Jan. 8.

AND has your parent lived to see his melancholy prophecy more than fulfilled? Must I be told that my sweet child

child is already driven from her magnificent abode? Foolish sympathy! my eyes are dim; they will not let me proceed; and yet I have much to say.

Oh! Frances, I have been too often witness of your anxiety. I saw the tear of anguish suffuse your cheek; I beheld sorrow, pity, love, contempt, in every working feature when your husband dashed the destructive cards upon the ground, imprecating curses on his evil *genius*! Weak man! I saw how earnest you were to hide the deep chagrin from the surrounding company, who triumphed in the misfortunes they had occasioned. I beheld, and dropped a tear.

How gratefully you deduced comfort from your father's former letters!—But, my child, I could not then suppose a destruction so complete. I could not then imagine you would contentedly give up the only chance for future support. Why, Frances, do you persist in contributing to Wilmot's folly?

folly? Why offer him the important deed? Do you think, when his affairs are finished, he will be more considerate than before? Too surely he will not. Your parent is in his duty, while he advises, entreats, nay, *commands*, you, to withhold the last stake from the hand of extravagance. What are a few hundreds, what are jewels, however valuable, when cast upon the waters? Oh! my beloved, you may yet behold a rising family, who must, in this case, live to mourn a father's dissipation, a mother's mistaken tenderness. — Remember, it is yet in your power to keep back the means of subsistence from cruel sharpers. — I must rest.

I am not blind to Mr. Wilmot's excellent qualities. I have been an admirer of his connubial love and generous friendship. I know him to be courageous, benevolent, affable. I have seen the marks of an ingenuous mind, under deep contrition and self-reproach, when smarting for

for the consequence of severe losses. But how are all these excellencies tarnished? Of what avail is compunction and repentance, where the ideas are so extremely desultory as to admit every impression, whether salutary or pernicious? And where the inclinations are so variable as to change with every gale of passion? Understand, I speak but to the present subject. Can my daughter forget, when, won by her patient sweetness, Mr. Wilmot has engaged not to leave the endearing pleasures of domestic society; — when, solicitous to reward him for a compliance beneficial to himself and pleasing to all around him, she has, by a thousand winning methods, expressed her satisfaction? — Oh! can she then forget, a message from those diabolical miscreants has often broken the social party; while, blushing from a consciousness of wrong, he has left a virtuous wife and joined the destroyers of his fame and fortunes?

Dearest

Dearest Frances, suffer me to plead in *your* behalf. Leave this infatuated man. Fly, with the little property you have left, fly from destruction, ere it overtake thee. Remember your delicate situation; — how soon you will produce an innocent partner of your distresses; — a guiltless inheritor of its culpable father's misfortunes. Under my roof the tongue of scandal cannot reach thee. A parent's protection added to the clerical function must deaden the slightest hint to your prejudice. Look back, my love, to the hour when Wilmot made you his. — But four short years! — Just God! how my eyes overflow at the painful retrospect! Where are the sumptuous fortunes, splendid carriages, stately mansion, superb furniture, with all that profusion which distinguished your setting out in life? — Gone! — Lost! Swallowed in that gulph from whence there is no return! — I vainly thought my amiable child amply rewarded for her

filial duty, exemplary patience, and useful virtues, when the noble Wilmot made her his wife. I saw not poverty lurking at the heels of extravagance. I knew not my daughter had tasted more solid content in the gloomy retirement of Crawford-Abbey than she would meet in the dwellings of the great: more felicity in the arched recesses of a gothic building than in the magnificent receptacles of luxury and pleasure. Condemn me not for pressing the necessity of your removal, nor think me cruel for the freedom of my observations. All that parental indulgence can bestow or sisterly tenderness invent to sooth the wounded mind, shall be yours, my lovely unfortunate daughter. Adieu,

LOUISA JENKINS.

P. S. What a poor writer is your father now! What he could once execute in a few hours is now not to be accomplished in three days. Your sister has written more than half this letter.

Mrs.

Mrs. WILMOT to the Rev. Mr. JENKINS.

Norwood, Jan. 14

IT is a father's hand. I can trace the revered the well-known characters. My soul is pierced with a melting proof of his kindness. Yes, the liveliest affection to his hapless daughter predominates. But, Oh! my God! what does this tender parent advise! Why am I shocked by commands so dreadful? — To leave — great heaven! — *to leave my husband!* — Desert the generous man who has placed in me such unlimited confidence! to whose liberality I owe the power of mitigating his difficulties! — And at *such* a moment, when poverty, with all its chilling concomitants, must, if not assisted *by me*, distress his valuable heart! Dear unhappy Edward, shall the woman, who shared with thee thy affluent fortune, whose love is superior to the frowns of fate, — shall *she* desert thy faithful bosom? — Resign

B 2

thee

thee to those dispiriting reflections which her soothing kindness might soften? — Perish the thought! — I will not plant the thorns of neglect where requited love should ever bloom.

Dear sir, forgive me. — Pardon what *you* may deem the *rashness* of connubial duty. In your daughter's estimation, *that* duty is most sacred; claims a prior right even to filial attention. And shall not *its* claim be observed? Plead not for the unborn. It is the care of Omnipotence. Ignorant of the loss of riches it cannot inherit, I will teach it *content*, which will supply the place of superfluous advantages. — For myself, resignation to the Almighty's awful behests shall calm a mother's anxious feelings. — Oh! think, dearest father, should heaven bless me with future progeny, — think, when reason shall strengthen with their years, how much they must censure rather than applaud her frigid prudence who could withhold

wit'—old the necessary supply from her distressed partner, and coldly see their parent reduced perhaps to penury, because a wife's avarice will not let her *husband* enjoy — his right!

It was not always so: often have you, my good sir, recommended invariable patience and steady fortitude under my disappointments. — Why then dictate such violent measures? I am sure you will consider, and retract the harsh commands; at least, you *must* forgive and pity your

FRANCES WILMOT.

Mrs. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

READ the inclosed, and admire the venerable bishop.

The Bishop of C—— to Mrs. WILMOT.

Portman-Square, Jan. 14.

HOW bears the best of women this melancholy reverse of fate? Does her conduct realise those maxims of forti-

which lately flowed with modest ingenuity from the lips of prudence? Feels she that satisfaction resulting from a consciousness of having done *more* than her duty? But why put these unnecessary questions? Why suppose Mrs. Wilmot would act contrary to the general tenor of her behaviour? Has she not been moderate, forbearing, in *prosperity*? Yes; her friends bear willing testimony to this assertion. And can *adversity* boast its power over her heroic spirit? — Shall *she* sink under the *less* arduous trial, who has greatly overcome the more dangerous temptations of high life? No; I have every reason to suppose she still can exult in the happiness of an uncorrupted mind, and a heart undepressed by misfortune. See you not, my dear madam, how artfully my hypothesis is calculated not to flatter, but to encourage, a noble soul, in her successful struggles against undeserved calamity? — Do you not imagine me careless, — inattentive to
the

the interest of my friends? Are you not ready to say, the bishop's absence at this critical period is incompatible with the warmth of his professions, and his duty as a Christian? Incline not, my good lady, to an idea so repulsive to his humanity, so derogatory to his feelings. Do me the justice to attribute the seeming negligence to a delicate motive. Mr. Wilmot, I am aware, is strongly alive to the difficulties of his situation. Might he not wish to shun, at present, even the mild eye of friendship? You, dear lady, might choose, at this time, solitude, and the liberty of consoling, without interruption, the partner of your affections. — These considerations alone have prevented my desire of seeking the habitation of those I so much esteem. But I have *not* been idle. I have visited the unhappy man who ought to confess the highest fraternal obligations to your husband. I have *visited* him, but, good God! *what*

a reception! — I have done more; I have explored the abode of infamy; — sought out the residence of Ward, and condescended to enter the regions of corruption; but I could not get at the vile inhabitant.

Good heaven! that Edward Wilmot should — But I have done. — I mean not reproach where comfort is intended: and yet unalloyed comfort cannot result from my enquiries. — Determined to know the extent of your misfortunes, I went yesterday to Ingram. My appearance surprised the abject man. What an awkward confusion prevented his prompt speech when I entered upon the subject of my errand! You shall *not* be pained by a recital of my disappointments. Suffice it to say, nothing shall be neglected that can restore peace to the unfortunate and bring atrocious villainy to justice.

I am averse from apologizing for actions which proceed from *good will*, and equally

so

so to the acknowledgments of *gratitude*. The first, from myself, would be inconsistent; the last, from you, would be unwelcome. Believe a serious truth, that the welfare of your family is very much at the heart of

EMANUEL C——.

Mrs. WILMOT in continuation.

SEE, Louisa, what an encouragement to persist in one's duty! What flattering encomiums! What grateful plaudits! Even Edward is overcome. He lifts up his eyes in silent joy, and is determined to write to his lordship, notwithstanding the delicate insinuation at the bottom of his epistle. Is there not reason for the most unfeigned thanks, when munificence has extended a liberal hand? For, my dear sister, the bishop inclosed a £1000 bill for our present use. — Generous man! Who would grudge the most lucrative benefice, even pluralities, to him who thus liberally dispenses blessings to the *indigent*? I will
send

send you my husband's note written to the bishop. — Adieu, my dear.

FRANCES WILMOT.

EDWARD WILMOT *to the Bishop of C—.*

Norwood, Jan. 15.

GRATEFUL for favours unexpected as undeserved, Edward Wilmot begs excuse of lord C— for his inability to resist the effusion of a heart he yet presumes to call uncorrupted. At the same time, acknowledging, with the highest regret, his seeming inattention, in not noticing, at an earlier period, the very friendly and benevolent letter he received from his lordship. Penetrated as he then was by the salutary and affecting admonitions, Wilmot can only plead the uneasy situation of his affairs as a motive for his silence. — Should any future weakness in his behaviour require the careful hand of correction, he will presume to hope

hope for that kind attention from the bishop of C——, which flatters while it awakens, and soothes while it convinces. . .

Mrs. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

Norwood, Jan. 18.

GOOD God! Louisa, what a story have I heard! — The hermit, — the Savoyard, — The duel, — all, all, explained! — The gentle Savoyard! Well might her sorrows induce such affecting behaviour! — But to the point. — Sitting this morning in my little parlour, — (We have but *one* visiting-room now, sister,) — I was alarmed at a chaise driving up to the gate. — John ran to me, to know what answer he should give, supposing they were strangers. — Poor John! he will not leave us. — Before I could settle my determination, Mr. Wilmot came in at the gate from a walk. I saw him assist an elegant woman from the carriage. It was too late to deny her admission. She entered

tered, and I recognized — the Savoyard ! — The appearance of this striking figure brought to my recollection the painful events of that dreadful night in which I first beheld her. She approached with an air of depressed dignity. A melancholy wildness, bordering upon insanity, clouded her hazle eyes, rather adding to, than diminishing, the inexpressible sweetness of her countenance. Her cheeks and lips, quite colourless, indicated a broken constitution. Oh ! sister, what an interesting female is this Savoyard ! I knew not, till convinced by *her*, how very possible it is to be enchantingly agreeable without one regular feature, and with a complexion perfectly fallow. She speaks in a sublime stile, something romantic, the effects of a conventual life. Looking around her, she sighed, and, turning to me, — “ Methinks” said she, in French, “ this habitation is ill suited to Mrs Wil-
“ mot’s convenience.”

“ I will

"I will make, madam," returned your Frances "my convenience suit my situation; and you will allow, at least, there is prudence in the resolution if not ambition."

"But to *whom*," answered she, "is it owing that *such* a woman is *so* reduced? — Wonder not at this liberty of speech, for oh! lady, you see before you the wretched wife of Sir Henry Wilmot."

Just heaven! Lady Wilmot! I was speechless.

"You look surprised, sweet lady. Will you not own an unfortunate sister?"

"Not *own* her" said Edward, clasping the dear creature in his arms, — "yes, and protect her to the utmost of my limited power."

I joined in the friendly embrace, and exclaimed, "Was it *you*, dear madam, that so patiently followed an unworthy husband? Did the injured *wife* so quietly

“ etly attend the motions of a guilty
“ pair ?”

“ Attend him ! Oh ! God ! I did but
“ my duty. This heart accords to his
“ most extravagant wishes. — I would
“ wait, did he require it, with obsequious
“ obedience, upon” — Here she hesitated
and wiped a falling tear. — “ Even upon
“ — the woman he adores. — Oh ! Mrs
“ Wilmot, a convent is but ill suited to
“ banish the remembrance of abused love
“ Solitude, sacred music, idleness, pathetic
“ conversation with the imprisoned inmates
“ habitants of the awful mansion, are
“ badly calculated to remove ideas which
“ once have cherished. Every thing contrived
“ tributes to renew, rather than to destroy
“ a soul-moving sorrow. We do not attempt
“ tempt, in the smallest degree, to reconcile
“ cile ourselves to the unjust confinement
“ Warmed by the natural wish for freedom,
“ dom, the heart revolts at tame submission.
“ mission.”

Poor thing! she stopt to weep. We offered refreshments, but she would not be interrupted.

“ Alas! I have been obliged to consent
“ for years to the deprivation of all my
“ soul holds dear, and might yet have
“ been lamenting the loss of liberty, but
“ for the interference of my confessor,
“ who applied to the pope’s nuncio, and
“ I was released without conditions. —
“ For some months after my deliverance,
“ I was engaged in an unremitted search
“ for my beloved. Successless for some
“ time was that search, till chance led me
“ to lodge under the same roof with Mr.
“ Tenby. We soon recollected each other,
“ and deeply bewailed the loss we had
“ mutually sustained. It was from him
“ I gained the information that our faith-
“ less partners were to be at the masque-
“ rade; and, by a diligent enquiry at the
“ habit-warehouses, got a knowledge of
“ their dress. Wonder not that I fol-
“ lowed

lowed them. A gentleman in your
company rather obstructed my plan,
which was, to attend them till curiosity
should demand the reason of my particular
behaviour. I then meant to have
drawn my husband aside, and make
the dreaded discovery. — Mr. Tenby,
who knew me not in that dress, added
to my vexation, by his inquisitive
pursuits. But I remained unknown. When
the impatience of your hermit brought
on that horrid éclaircissement, I was
distracted. The name of Wilmot
sounded terribly in my ears. How
could I be ascertained of the truth? —
Wilmot wounded, was Wilmot *dead*.
I doubted not the effect of Tenby's
ferocity, and knew how far rage would
carry the wronged, the ill-treated, husband.
I also knew his injuries had once
before deprived him of reason; no
wonder they should banish prudence.
These reflections were the work of a
moment.

“ moment. With strength equal to my
“ fears I forced my way to the scene of
“ mischief at the instant my husband fell.
“ My actions were extravagant. It was
“ impossible to stay by him. I grew al-
“ most delirious, and, in my way to ano-
“ ther room, I saw *you* in agonies. My
“ ideas were rapid. For whom could *you*
“ lament? Why wring *your* hands? Were
“ *you* deceived by Wilmot? This thought,
“ momentary and groundless, produced
“ my application to one whom I imagined
“ a partner in my distress. Oh! madam,
“ you will forgive my misconception at
“ that terrible period; for *you* were equally
“ apprehensive of the danger of *your* Ed-
“ ward. When recovered from a state of
“ insensibility by a generous lady, I saw
“ you approach, and, in the most affect-
“ ing manner, you convinced me that
“ Wilmot was no more. The distress
“ which convulsed your frame was not
“ the common effect of a sudden shock;

“ nor could your feelings for a murdered
“ stranger so agitate your trembling
“ nerves. I beheld, but could not de-
“ velope the reason. — Pity for your
“ distress, shame for my own want of
“ discretion, mortified love for a wretched
“ husband, all coincided to sink me deeper
“ in misery than before, and I could think
“ of no possible means but flying from
“ the joint causes of my torture. Arrived
“ at my lodgings, I found the family in
“ great anxiety. The unhappy Tenby
“ was brought home in a state of absolute
“ distraction. I would have quitted the
“ house, as his ravings were intolerable;
“ but, sick and faint, from bodily fatigue,
“ I had yet the more agonizing pangs of
“ a disappointed heart to struggle with.
“ For three days a happy depriva-
“ tion of sense gave respite to my sor-
“ rows; but with returning reason I felt
“ renewed anguish. The first thing that
“ occurred to my yet unsettled brain was
the

“ the duel. I enquired about it, but
“ received no answer. The looks of
“ my attendants seemed to predict some
“ fatal consequence. When I grew
“ better, they informed me that Tenby’s
“ life and troubles had for ever ter-
“ minated. Now, then, I cried, the
“ guilty Eliza may boast a natural free-
“ dom from those shackles she has so
“ long endeavoured to force, and give
“ her perjured paramour, (if living,)
“ a temporary release from trouble. The
“ entrance of my servant, whom I had
“ sent to learn the state of Sir Henry’s
“ health, turned the course of my ideas;
“ and, while I lamented the death of
“ wretched Tenby, I felt a secret pleasure
“ that my husband was yet in being.

“ As soon as I was able to go abroad,
“ my first excursion was to Richmond.
“ — My physician mentioned the air as
“ salubrious. — Walking one evening
“ gently down the hill, I heard the sound

“ of Wilmot’s name, from a party that
“ was just before me. Eager to know
“ what perhaps might only yield torment,
“ I hastened after them, and heard a gen-
“ tleman telling the adventure of the
“ masquerade. My story was falsely re-
“ presented; but he mentioned a Mrs.
“ Wilmot, as the person who had suffered
“ from my frantic mistake. The mystery
“ was now cleared up; and, by what I
“ could understand, (for my knowledge
“ of the English tongue is very imperfect,)
“ it appeared that you had removed from
“ your former house. I lost no time in
“ seeking the lady I had undesignedly
“ injured, and it was with much plea-
“ sure I found your abode. Forgive then
“ a misguided creature, who, impelled by
“ terror, had distressed the loveliest of
“ her sex, and attribute the cause to —
“ O madam, — to the cruel pair who
“ have destroyed the felicity of an un-
“ happy woman. They may rejoice, when
“ the

“ the victims to their barbarity can no
“ longer oppose or damp their illieit
“ transports. One is already sacrificed,
“ and I.” —

Here she paused. — Dear afflicted soul,
how her grief affected us!

“ Indeed,” she resumed, in a sobbing
accent, “ their raptures will not long en-
“ dure. Those difficulties once subsided
“ which raised and supported their unlaw-
“ ful transports, the mask will fall, and
“ ah! what a shocking reverse! Every
“ trouble will rise to misery, and every
“ enjoyment sink to nothing.”

She could say no more, but threw her-
self back in the chair, and indulged a
violent fit of weeping. She means to re-
turn to that convent she was so eager to
quit, notwithstanding her strictures on the
inefficacy of these places of devotion to
cure a wounded mind. But the little
wanderings which mark her conversation
are indications of disturbed intellects.

Were her understanding clear, I would not part with the sweet itinerant; but, in her present state, travelling may prove a tolerable succedaneum for lost tranquility. She stayed the day with us, and, at parting, conjured me to inform her how Sir Henry went on.

At last, then, Louisa, the unfortunate *husband* is at rest. At length the diabolical *wife* may exult. Patient lady Wilmot! Thy prophecy will soon prove true. Loaded with *such* crimes, they cannot long continue in the fatal dream, and will be awakened to torture superior to what the upright heart can suggest, or the most lively (if innocent) imagination depict.

My sister, you are unkind. — Not one line since our father's return. Write I beseech you, and tell me he is not angry with his *daughter* because she cannot prove an unnatural *wife*. Adieu, my sister.

FRANCES WILMOT.

Miss,

Miss JENKINS to Mrs. WILMOT.

Crawford-Abbey, Jan. 16.

CAN my sister, whose soul seems formed by nature for the noblest kindest purposes, — whose gentleness no injuries could disturb, no provocations destroy, — can *she* give exquisite pain to a tender father? Dear Frances, what a letter have you written to the almost broken-hearted old man! Do not fancy, my love, that Louisa encourages a thought of adding to your perplexities. Do not imagine me incapable of doing justice to a woman, who, in such distress, can display heroism that would do honour to a Roman matron. — Yes, believe your Louisa, when she professes encreasing love and admiration of your excellent qualities. But, my beloved, great as the connubial obligation undoubtedly is, must it absorb every other tender tie? Do you deem it necessary to evince exalted duty to a husband, by writing the words of harshness

to a sympathising parent? Forgive me, if I relate the effect your peremptory denial had upon his feeble spirits. Our servant waited two hours, at the Crown, before the post arrived, which was retarded by an immaterial accident. Impatient to hear from you, my father walked to some distance from the Abbey, took the packet from James, and entered the parlour with it in his hand.

“ A treasure ! Louisa,” said he. “ It
“ is from my dear child. Read it, love,
“ and tell me if she accords to my wishes.
“ — Tell me if I shall soon embrace an
“ obedient daughter, — a prudent wife ?”
He sat leaning forward in the attitude of extreme attention ; edging his chair still nearer to mine, his curiosity encreasing as his amazement was excited by the beginning of your letter.

“ Stop, my dear ; what is that ? Some,
“ thing like a refusal ? Poor thing ! I do
“ not wonder at her reluctance. Do
“ not

“ not go on so fast, Louisa. — Ha!

“ — What’s *that*? — What do you read?

“ — PERISH THE THOUGHT?” — Oh!

“ that is a strong expression. — No more,

“ child; enough have I heard. I have

“ added sorrow to affliction, and loaded

“ the heart already struggling with unde-

“ served calamity.” — He leant upon

his hand, and even sobbed. — “ Yet” said

he, “ I meant well. Should my *daughter*

“ have penned a denial in such *very*

“ severe terms to an invitation from pa-

“ rental kindness?”

Disappointment and vexation kept *me*

silent; for I too had encouraged wishes

for your loved society. — He sat mute,

deeply sighing. At length, looking at

me, and rising from his chair, — “ So,

“ she will *not* come. She is angry with

“ her *father*. — I am very wretched.”

The dear distressed man walked to the

door, and viewing that rose-bush which

you planted in happy days, deprived now

“ of

of all its beauty by winter's chilling gale

"I want not," he said, "*this* memento

"of her affection. Louisa, you cannot for-

"get when she planted it. — It was just

"as I was recovering from a violent fe-

"ver. Well do I remember how tenderly

"she said, *As this bush will bloom in the cheer-*

ful warmth of June, so may a total

respite from pain restore our father's

strength, and revive the blossom of

health on his countenance.'

"But she leaves me now for ever.

"She will not attend the tedious revolu-

"tions of miserable days and nights of

"anguish. I shall never more be lulled

"to sleep by her fascinating voice, nor

"rejoice in her cheerful conversation.

"No, I shall never see her more!"

He was interrupted by your poor sol-

dier. "I could not" said Sternheim,

"rest in my cottage, bad as the weather

"is. I have been told disagreeable ti-

"dings,

“ dings, and came to hear them revoked.

“ — Pray tell me, how is my *revered*
“ *lady* ?”

No answer being returned, Sternheim’s good sense and politeness soon intimated the necessity of his absence, and he was limping to the door, supported by George, when my father spoke to him.

“ Come back, Augustus, and teach me
“ to bear disappointment with *thy* pa-
“ tience.

The veteran shook his head. — “ Alas !
“ sir, I came for consolation and meet dis-
“ tress. Strange and cruel reports have
“ wounded my feelings. Is it true, then,
“ that Mrs. Wilmot is deprived of the
“ power of gratifying her noble heart by
“ relieving the necessitous ? — Is it a fact
“ that she has lost her fortune by trea-
“ chery and infernal artifices ?”

“ Worse than that, Sternheim. *I*, her
“ father, have increased her troubles, and
“ *she*, in return, — has torn *my* soul !”

“ I

“ I reverence your sorrows, sir ; and
 “ *wish*, oh how limited is the expression !
 “ — but it is all I can, — to *wish* for
 “ blessings on you and yours equal to your
 “ virtues.”

He would stay no longer, but departed, with a heavy and unequal step, as much retarded by depressed spirits as infirmity.

Have I afflicted my Frances by this relation ? Be candid, and forgive me. Write immediately, dearest creature, and let your epistle be fraught with expressions that carry the tenderest meaning. It is your *duty* to expand the heart that shrinks from his child's severity. Forget not to offer our most affectionate remembrance to your dear Edward. Adieu, my love.

LOUISA JENKINS.

Mrs. WILMOT to the Rev. Mr. JENKINS.

Norwood.

IF my insensibility has drawn the tear of anguish from the person whose troubles

bles I would *die* to diminish ;—if I have unwillingly destroyed his peace, who strives (however mistaken the means) to promote mine ; — then is Frances Wilmot's punishment just, and she submits without repining. But does that submission preclude the hope of forgiveness ? May I presume to expect a toleration in the most essential *offence*, and persist in *that* offence ? Will my father annihilate my fault and generously give up the expectation of further concession ? He will, and I am comforted. But oh ! sir, may I explain a late transaction ? Is this a proper time to try the strength of your forgiveness ? May I venture already to acquaint you, that it is now out of your daughter's power to withhold aught from her husband ? Dear sir, attend with patience. — I aim not either at justification or apology, but must observe, that, in my situation, *you* would not hesitate one moment

moment to do an act, which, as *my father*, you will not, I hope, *condemn*.

Our creditors have met. The wretch, Ingram, has received the whole of his debt. The Brenchly estate is sold; but that estate was not sufficient to satisfy such a vast demand. What remained to be done? It required little debate, less preparation. The settlement was adequate to every contingency, and we are once more free. — That is, — indeed I hardly know what to write upon this part of our affairs. — Ward has not claimed *his* due. Edward says, he is conscious of our inability to pay it, and generously gives up his right. But how is that, my father? I should rather suppose he is fearful of making a claim he cannot support, or possibly dreads the bishop's interference. I should not suspect a man of his cast for an act of *justice*, much less of *generosity*. I shall proceed no farther till my parent shall send, though but in *one* line, the credentials

dentials of his forgiveness to his duteous

FRANCES WILMOT.

The Rev. Mr. JENKINS to Mrs. WILMOT.

Crawford-Abbey, Jan. 22.

YOUR tranquility my child must be the foundation of *mine*. If the free forgiveness of a fond parent can be an addition to his daughter's peace of mind, permanent and lasting may it prove. May your unexampled attachment to Mr. Wilmot meet with its reward. Tell him, I wish returning felicity may bless his future days. — Farewel, my noble, — yes, *too* noble, Frances. SAMUEL JENKINS.

P. S. I am amazed at the celerity with which your husband's creditors have dispatched his affairs. But one month since the execution, and every part of the important business properly arranged relative to the payment of his debts. This extraordinary haste is both unusual and unpre-

unprecedented. But I interfere not. Never may you experience similar distress.

Mrs. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

Norwood, Jan. 25.

I Have scarcely patience to bid my sister read the inclosed mandate of villainy.

Lord D—— to Mrs. WILMOT.

WHEN beauty, elegance, and sensibility, united, are sinking into ruin, we feel ideas abhorrent of such calamity. Politeness, decorum, requisites so necessary to keep up the dignity of situation, vanish upon retrospection, and the humane heart is alive only to the most certain methods necessary for the extrication of the possessor of those accomplishments. Mrs. Wilmot's afflictions call for every consolation the liberal hand of friendship can offer. Thus circumstanced, it is presumed she will forgive that temerity which can only be excused by the most honourable

able motives. From those *motives*, pure and unfullied, Frederic D—— lays at Mrs. Wilmot's feet the tribute of his fortunes. Happy, if, by administering to that lady's convenience, he may be permitted to prove his title to her esteem. — He dare not yet say more.

Sister, now indeed my distresses are arrived to a pitch of horror not to be surmounted. The above — what shall I name it? — has shewn my wretchedness in the most dispiriting light, — Detested lord D——! How shall I answer your infernal scrawl! Are not filial duty and connubial love severely wounded by this disgraceful supplication? Extends not the shocking insult to every revered relation? Is not the vile supposition, that I should bear the degrading taint, a tacit reflection upon my noble husband? At this awful period, too, when an innocent babe must soon share its mother's infamy. — Louisa, has your Frances ever shewn such a dis-

regard for virtue as to authorise the un-
 licenced freedom? Powers of mercy,
 break not the thread attenuated by for-
 row! Blunt the barbed dart which is aimed
 at my Edward's honour! Poverty the
 most distressful I can cheerfully struggle
 against; and, though nature will feel, yet
 my soul has steadily sustained the reme-
 diless evil. But this addition hangs with
 inconceivable weight upon my spirits, and
 I *must* complain. — I will answer his let-
 ter, sister. — I will send back the token
 of indicated shame.

Mrs. WILMOT to Lord D——.

THE *still* noble though ruined
 Wilmot asks not relief from the
 hand that offers a paltry pittance as ade-
 quate to the forfeiture of peace, honour,
 love, and life! — Blush, Lord D——
 while you hold a dagger to the bosom
 that yet throbs with misguided friendship.
 — Stab not the heart which retains one
 spot

spot only unpierced by misfortune. This for my husband. — For myself, I am proud to say, contempt alone expresses my feelings for the cruel insult. . . .

Mrs. WILMOT in continuation.

DO not, my Louisa, judge this spirit incompatible with your sister's disposition. The dignity of affronted virtue admits not tame and cold expostulation. What is that but to oppose a powerful adversary with a nerveless arm? Think not I *fear* or doubt of victory. Yet why sustain the shock of contention; when, by the most cautious conduct, my safety is secured. — How many are the avenues to detraction! Though unconscious of impropriety, what injuries may not the female character endure! — What wounds to the wife's domestic peace, even while proclaiming her triumph, may be given by the corrosive tooth of malevolence! — The world, Louisa, believes a story as

it is represented. Nay, *envy* too oft will point the cruel farcasm. The horrid incendiary employs her bitterest shafts, and strikes deep as fatal. Careful is her aim, and the thoughtless victim pines beneath the blow, unknowing whence it came. How circumspect, how delicately tenacious of her honour, should the woman be, whose situation exposes her to the bold and pernicious attacks of the worthless libertine! — What ruinous depredation may be committed upon her happiness, while, with a laughing carelessness, she receives the fulsome compliment from those, who, beneath the appearance of adulation, conceal the dart of calumny, ready to strike at her reputation when opportunity shall present. — Guarded by conscious virtue, she may possibly defy their utmost power, and hear her own condemnation with affected cheerfulness. But seldom does it stop there. The tale once fabricated flows, like the
wandering

wandering stream, through many channels, and from each derives some additional taint. The husband hears a story that freezes his affection. Suspicion embitters their unquiet hours; while rage, most probably excited by indignant treatment, converts their once happy dwelling into the abode of wretchedness. Nor stops the evil here. Seldom, if ever, can the miserable pair regain their former confidence in each other's conduct. Trifles become subjects of peevish altercation, and continual uneasiness corrodes their future days.

Methinks this digression has somewhat relieved my troubled mind. Certainly the above reflections tend but to strengthen my determination to avoid those dangers which are the undoubted consequence of careless inattention to the points I have discriminated. Farewell, dear sister; re-

member to express my dutious thanks to our beloved parent for his tender letter.

FRANCIS WILMOT.

Sir HENRY WILMOT to Mrs. TENBY.

Soho, Jan. 7.

ELIZA, wilt thou not personally congratulate thy adoring lover upon his ability to express, by pen, the joy that fills his heart. Safely thou mayest. Free as air is the person as well as inclinations of my Tenby. — But no, her heart is mine; with me she placed the precious deposit. — Have you not heard the rapturous news? — The bow can no more be bent against our peace. Your *husband* — Yes, my fair one, — your persecutor for ever ceases to interrupt our pleasures. *He is dead*; — expired in all the misery of raging madness. — After three days of intolerable anguish, he gave up to the *king of terrors*, as he is idly called. Emerge then, thou soul of Henry, emerge into life,

life, splendor, gaiety. Dazzle the admiring world, but *delight* only thy

WILMOT.

Mrs. HAINES to Sir HENRY WILMOT.

Swallow-street, Jan. 8.

Please your Honour, Sir,

I Have given your letter to madam Tenby, but she is so ill I don't know what to make on her. She ant been well never sence she was at the maskerade; for she come home, that night, for all the world as iff she was at her witts end. She won't neither ete nor drink but what I forces down; and at this rate she'll be guilty of self-murder, and that will be a shocking thing, as I say. She bid me rede your letter to her, and I thought she would go into convulshuns when she heard her husband was dede; for your honor knows wee live so close, for fear of her being found out, that wee never hear nothing, as I say. She cried almost all night

after it, and woudent hear your worship's name mentioned. Pray, sir, don't never write any more sich mollincholy tydings, for it only makes her worse. From your honor's dewtiful fervant,

MARY HAINES.

Sir HENRY WILMOT to J. WARD.

Sobs.

WARD, I am distracted. The enchanting Tenby lies dangerously ill, and I cannot attend her. This cursed wound, which surgeon A— pronounced might be safely cicatrised, is again broke out, and bears a threatening appearance. They talk of a mortification; — words of course, when the patient can pay for being tormented. — Certainly, my pain is excruciating, yet does it bear no proportion to the agony of my mind. Go to my dear Eliza, make her situation as comfortable as my absence will permit. Tell her, I hope soon to confirm the hopes
my

my last letter gave. Indeed, I little thought, four days since, of being confined. Confound the doctor, he has added to my misery by his searching dressings.

J. WARD to Sir HENRY WILMOT.

SIR, *Dyot-street.*

I Receiv'd your honners letter in your brother's presence; tho' indeed he has nothin to lose, so it is to littel purpose to keep him companee. But I think its beter than doing nuthing, becase as why, it makes him think beter on me. He axed me a great manny questions; but he coudn't git eny thing out of me; and at last fed, as I was so ginnerus about my dett, he wou'd lessen it as sone as he coud spare the munny. — He littel thinks — but mum — for that.

And so your honnor I vent to Mrs. Haines's. — A good cumely fort of a body;

dy; but that duſint ſignify. — She axed me to go up ſtairs. But to be ſure I ſtared to ſee ſuch an alteration in madam Tenby. She's as pale as my ſhirt; and her eyes are ſunk in her head. Her fine black eye-brows too is all off; I ſuppoſe with a fever. As ſoon as ſhe ſee me ſhe fell a crying. I couldn't git her to ſpeak, tho I ſaid every thing to comfort her. But all woudnt do. Even ven I told her of her husband's deth, ſhe didn't ſo much as thank me, but hid her face in the pillar and ſob'd as if her heart wou'd brake. — I had a good deal of talk with Mrs. Haines; ſhe ſays madam Tenby as very littel munny. I woud have left ſume, but thought it was better to axe your honner fuſt. I am, with great obedience, your honner's ſervant,

J. WARD.

Sir

Sir HENRY WILMOT to J. WARD.

Senseless blockhead! — Dolt! — Idiot! — Was it for the sake of thy illiterate correspondence my request was made? Didst thou visit that angelic creature for the ridiculous purpose of admiring her delectable landlady, and to triumph in my dear Eliza's distress? Fly to Swallow-street, take Dr. J——. Get every convenience that money can purchase, — and immediately inform me of the physician's opinion. If my torments were supportable, I would not give thee this important trust. Be here to-morrow.

Mrs. TENBY to Sir HENRY WILMOT.

Swallow-street, Jan. 11.

Debilitated by sickness, dispirited from situation, and, oh! far worse, wretched, most wretched, through an awakened sense of guilt, where, for *me*, is comfort to be found? My husband is *dead*; past even the possibility of knowing
my

my bitter compunction. It is true, I never loved him. Forced, from prudential reasons, to accept his hand, I still detested him. But, dreadful! was I to be his *murderer*? We have laws in force against those who slay by the knife, the cord, the pistol; but where can adequate punishment be found for *her* who inflicts the worst of deaths, *a broken heart*? Where are my deserted children? What kind hand has fostered the innocents whom a barbarous mother so infamously neglected? Once their prattle diverted me. How could I leave the pretty creatures? Sir Henry, adieu for ever. The lost Eliza will never see you more.

Sir HENRY WILMOT to Mrs. TENBY.

ELIZA, thou *shalt not* die. Revive, my soul's delight. Happy days will yet be our portion. Give not up to this depression of spirits. Be cheerful, and all will be well. I write in pain, but that is

a trifle. — Go to the country, my love.
I hope soon to follow thee.

HENRY WILMOT.

Mrs. HAINES to Sir HENRY WILMOT.

Honoured Sir, Highgate.

I Have, with much ado, perswaded madam Tenby to go to Highgate, where my aunt has a pretty little box. It is a pleasant place, and very holesum air. She seems better areddy, and wanted to write, but the doctor won't let her. She wishes you better, and bid me tell you so. I fancy the fyfician thinks her in a consumpshun. But do you know, sir, she won't be a minuet alone; and yet she won't never talk to me; but sithes and cries, and stares enough to frighten one. Last night she jumped up in her sleep, and cotch hold of me; for I lays with her. "Oh!" says she "forgive me. I cannot die in peace."

"Lord

“ Lord, of his infinite mercy, forbid,
“ madam,” says I.

She looked at me as wild as any thing.
“ And who are you ?” says she.

“ Oh ! the dearest,” says I ; “ don’t you
“ know poor Molly Haines ?”

She then flung herself to the further side
of the bed, and remained silent. Wishing
your honour better, I conclude myself
your dutiful servant,

M. HAINES.

The Bishop of C—— to Mrs. WILMOT.

Portman-Square.

I Felicitate you, with all my soul, dear
madam, upon the comfortable prospect
which displays itself after a night of
tempestuous horror. Those painful but
necessary arrangements, in which you have
been employed, and which must be indis-
pensable in such a situation, are now com-
pleted. It is a comfort to know the
worst ; that is, supposing the worst be
nearly

nearly past. Let *me* endeavour to prove the hypothesis. Thus, then: You are now freed from every embarrassment resulting from perplexed affairs. You have given up — (heroic woman) — every hope of affluence, solely to restore, or rather to preserve, the credit of your valuable husband. What remains? A tolerable house, decent furniture, and *very little* money. Not one article of luxury left. It gave me infinite pleasure to find you have reserved only the *conveniencies* of life: its superfluities are all disposed of. You can do without them. You can be content with mediocrity. Good creature! Now then for the means to support that mediocrity. Your Brenchly estate, no matter by what means, is fallen into my hands. I have much to say in its favour. The land rich and well cropped, — prospects lovely. — It's vicinity to L — is of much advantage. Can Mr. Wilmot find content in cultivating *that* spot his father

so

so much admired? Are the charms of London less agreeable by disappointment? And will he seek tranquility among the shades, the caverns, the fruitful fields, of Brenchley-Hill? While near the metropolis, his spirit may be hurt by the neglect of those who lately cringed for notice. Surely, then, he will not seek mortification, when a comfortable retreat offers itself to his acceptance upon the easy terms of living upon the spot. It is winter. — No matter. Domestic converse, the theoretic part of husbandry, the gun, the dog, will fill the time, and spring shall find my friend not unemployed, not unentertained. Hasten then to solitude and peace. — You will debate upon this proposal; and, when your determination is fixed, oblige me with an answer. Should it be as I wish, great will be the satisfaction of — E. C.

Mrs.
of

Mrs. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

Norwood, Feb. 1.

Formerly, Louisa, from the tenderness of her heart, dreaded to open her sister's letters. Bonds, deeds, executions, and every distressing occurrence, filled the blotted page. Blessed reverse! I hope soon to write the tidings of joy and peace; recess from sorrow, and an entire cessation of former difficulties. And, first, read the inclosed, from the venerable the noble bishop of C——.*

Well, my dearest, would you think it possible that Edward can demur one moment to a proposal so great, so disinterested? Certainly, he seems not inclinable to quit a place where misery had almost marked him for her own. I have employed every argument reason and reflection can produce in favour of the delightful plan; but he does not relish the charming scheme. It would be a diminution of my happiness to ex-

VOL. II.

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tort

* See Page 62.

tort his consent; I would rather it should be the result of choice. Can it be, that, after experiencing such disagreeable vicissitudes, he can again think of launching upon that ocean which has wrecked his most valuable property? I have no resource now. No deed, no settlement, whereon to build reasonable hopes.

But I see him upon the little grass-plat, playing with our faithful Cæsar. I will go down, and once more assail his reluctant spirit.

Four o'Clock.

Congratulate your sister upon the completion of her wishes. My Edward consents, cheerfully consents. — I went to him, and, accompanied by our tried and valuable domestic, the good old pointer, we strayed upon the common.

“Frances,” said Wilmot, “your dear bosom is heaving with some important matter. It betrays itself in your blushing cheek and down cast-eye. — But I know

"know the cause. My dear girl wishes to
"accept the bishop's offer."

"Is it not a *noble* offer, Edward?"

"And can my Frances readily give
"up those advantages which"—

"Name them not, my love. Blessed
"in your company, the correspondence
"of our valuable friends, and happy in
"the possession of that sweet retirement,
"I have no more to ask."

He kissed my cheek. "Enjoy your
"wish, my dearest. I will accede to
"your desires. We will not remain one
"week longer upon this spot."

I knelt upon the frozen turf, — could
not help it, — and gratefully thanked hea-
ven for this fortunate event.

Sister, the bishop is below. — I fly to
express my reverential gratitude.

This generous man means to secure
the estate to my husband as soon as the
writings can be prepared. — "I would

"madam" said this confederate spirit,

(Edward was then withdrawn,—) “I
“ would have settled the whole upon your-
“ self, well-knowing your attachment to
“ Mr. Wilmot. But that *very attachment*
“ would render such an arrangement use-
“ less, and prove the destruction of my
“ intention; unless it had been tied to
“ you and yours, exclusive of your hus-
“ band’s pretensions, who in this case, I
“ presume, must be your next heir. For
“ I am certain, the woman, who has cheer-
“ fully resigned the whole of her valuable
“ property to the purpose of satisfying *that*
“ husband’s creditors, would have little
“ reason to thank me for restricting her
“ unbounded benevolence, and rendering
“ her possessions of no avail, should dis-
“ tress again afflict the man she holds
“ most dear.”

What could I say to obligations which
no words can express? The moistened eye
and hands uplifted were the only testimo-
nies of my feelings.

When

When Wilmot returned, it was proposed we should immediately go to Brenchley. With pleasure was this motion acceded to by us both, and next week closes our correspondence from Norwood.

Well, my dear father, has not the almighty *rewarded*, may I write? Presumptuous word! it was but my *duty*; I was rewarded by the happiness I felt when the resignation was made. — *Justified*, then, let me say, by the consequence of my free donation to our creditors. Is not that a donation which we are not obliged to part with?

Ha! what says the servant? — I *will not* see Lord D——. Oh! that we had reached the asylum where insulting libertinism and cringing meanness dare not shew their heads. — So, his lordship sends up a note.

Lord D—— to Mrs. WILMOT.

Feb. 10.

LORD D—— is happy to inform Mrs. Wilmot, that his endeavours to serve the noble soldier have met with uncommon success. Inclosed is a corner's commission for George Sternheim. His pay commences from the 25th of last December. It is necessary the youth should be sent to town directly. At my house he will receive those instructions his situation must require. — D—— takes the liberty to send a bill for the young fellow's use, as a genteel wardrobe will be necessary. — It is presumed *Henry* is forward in his studies, there being no doubt of a vacancy on-board the *Pallas*, when the lad is capable of doing business in the capacity of a midshipman. I wish to see him with his brother.

Mrs.

Mrs. WILMOT in continuation.

DOES not this letter confirm my structure on his lordship's character in a former epistle? Pity such qualities should be sullied by vices which can plead no excuse. These noble actions, though they cannot change my sentiments respecting his base presumption, yet, in some measure, serve to counterbalance his blameable excesses.

Tell my worthy Sternheim, I rejoice with him upon the completion of our wishes. Poor man, I feel too for the loss he will sustain. However, his trouble may possibly be lessened by a scheme that Wilmot has proposed.

"Give," said he to me, "an unlimited invitation to the good man. There is a small cottage upon the waste, near our house, at Brenchley, which is inhabited by an honest couple, who will, if Mr. Sternheim approve the thought, be happy to board and attend him."

There, Louisa, tell him I insist upon his presence, when the journey can be made convenient. You, my dearest, will prepare proper necessaries for George's and Henry's use, and furnish Sternheim with money to answer every contingency. Adieu, dear sister. Convey our tenderest remembrance to the best of parents.

FRANCES WILMOT.

GEORGE STERNHEIM to Mrs. WILMOT.

Madam, *Folkstone, Feb. 23.*

I Humbly hope you will excuse this liberty. But indeed your grateful George's heart is so full that it would burst if he did not find some method of telling how much he loves, nay reveres, his kind benefactress. Perhaps, when used to genteel company, he may find better words to express his joy. Do not be angry with me, dear lady, for crying when I think of my poor lame father. Harry and I have been in tears all this morning,

morning, sometimes for joy, and sometimes for grief; and what made me worse, I looked through the key-hole of our little bed-chamber, and there was that good man kneeling, as well as he could, and crying ready to break his heart; and I heard him say, "What, both at once!" And then he *cried* again so terribly. However, you know, madam, how he loves us; so do not think the worse of him. — My brother wants to conclude this letter, so pray, madam, excuse his bad writing.

Concluded by Harry.

Well I know I do not write so well as George, but my heart is as good; and if I were a great gentleman, — that is, an admiral, — why you should be my lady, madam. — But pray who will lead my poor father about, when we are gone? I should cry so, if I thought he were to be neglected. Pray, madam, send somebody to take care of him, and boil his
milk,

milk, and to give him his crutches, and then we will go with pleasure. Please to give our best duty to Mr. Wilmot. I like him, but I love you.

GEORGE and HENRY STERNHEIM.

AUGUSTUS STERNHEIM to EDWARD WILMOT, Esq. and his Lady.

[Inclosed in the above.]

HEAVEN has heard my prayers, for the children of Matilda have met with benevolent protectors. — Oh! my heart. — I know they must leave me. — Poor things! — We weep, — we rejoice, — we kneel, — we pray. — Dearest, best, kindest, of beings, accept our grateful thanks. My dear children will attend lord D——. I will go to Brenchley. — My soul is disturbed. Remember, this note is the work of your

AUGUSTUS STERNHEIM.

Miss

Miss JENKINS to Mrs. WILMOT.

Crawford-Abbey, March 2.

DO not be alarmed, sister; but my father has got an unwelcome guest, — only the gout, Frances. — It is a visitant he could well have dispensed with, especially at this time, as it prevents the offer of my services at Brenchley. But, you know, this trying month is sure to call for the exertion of his patience.

You have made Sternheim (the first difficulty got over) supremely happy. I called upon him last Friday, and found the soldier endeavouring to write a few lines, tears almost obstructing his sight. The children were delighted to see me, and I left their father tolerably composed. Adieu, my sister. Adieu,

LOUISA JENKINS.

Mrs.

Mrs. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

Brenchley, March 10.

I Will not ask my sister's company, while her attendance is so absolutely necessary at Crawford-Abbey. May she divert, by her well-timed cheerfulness, the dear sufferer's anguish. I will endeavour, by a constant application to my pen, to elude the weary hours which must roll heavily on with our dear father.

And now let me call on you both to add your pious thanks to mine for the blessings which seem to be the consequence of our removal to Brenchley. Yes, my sister, we are settled; and I hope for life. Praised be Omnipotence, who has sweetened my present enjoyments by trials which I presume to hope are safely overcome. Far from the retreats of luxury, and secure from treachery's successful wiles, I am inclinable to contemplate the past as a heavy dream. Misery, it is true, has displayed her ugly face; but her shocking

shocking deformity serves but to set off, in the most pleasing colours, the present contrast, and renders my solitary retirement perfectly enchanting. Indeed, our days are totally barren of incident, and I am almost lost in a delirium of tranquil ease, except when certain expectations crowd upon my mind. Edward looks forward to the dreaded event with impatience, and often wishes for the little stranger's appearance, which, he says, at least, may rouse him from his torpid state, were it only by its helpless complaints. — Indeed, I wish he were more apparently delighted with our situation. If he be tempted, by my rapturous expressions, to mark the beauties of this place, it is but to draw the most degrading comparisons between Branchley and our former habitation. — Observe, he is enraptured with the latter. — When I admire the soaring lark's animating strains, which now begin to cheer the russet plain, —

“ Foolish !”

“Foolish!” he will say. “Do these
“wild notes compensate for the loss of
“Mrs. K——’s heavenly counter-tenor,
“the sweet warbling of my favourite
“M——, or the fascinating expression
“which plays in Mrs. W——’s enchant-
“ing melody?”

Sometimes, I venture to draw his at-
tention to those myriads of stars which
pour forth ten thousand streams of light.
He will hear me. — Perhaps cast an eye
towards the glittering sky: then tell me,
such prodigies are too far distant for his
uncertain contemplation. That those
party-coloured lamps which adorn the
Pantheon, or even the sparkling lustre of
Ranelagh’s gay illuminations, are more a-
greeably suited to his optics. — Time will, I
hope, refine my husband’s judgement and
purify his ideas, so far as to make him
endure, nay *seek*, the country’s serene plea-
sures. — Certainly, our residence is by
no means calculated to charm the gay, or

to teach them to forget the diversions of London. Brenchley-Hill bears some resemblance of Crawford-Abbey, though upon a smaller scale and in higher repair. The sides and back front, nearly covered with phillyria, have not the most lively aspect, but it looks better than the ivy which darkens my father's study. Our rooms are large, and perhaps want the cheerful advantage of more light, to make them desirable. — The house is situated near the summit of a stupendous chalk-hill, indented with many caverns. Every window, in front, commands an extensive view of the British channel. Behind is a spacious garden, perfectly in the modern stile. To the south lies an extensive park, amply tenanted with numbers of fine cattle. This is bounded by vast eminences, variously ornamented with woods, fertile inclosures, and old chalk-pits, that make a wild appearance, from large parts being nearly unsupported, which
give

give them the form of antient ruins. The interstices are filled with stunted trees, ragged furze, and stubbed grass. Our farm-yard, barns, stacks, stables, &c. are on the north side. It is but a pleasant walk to L——, from whence we are supplied with every necessary article.

Well, my dear, do you perceive any thing so horrid in this situation? The bishop pronounces it lovely: *I* am infinitely pleased with it. Edward,—but you know his opinion from what I have already related,—let me only add, he calls his Frances a little enthusiast.

March 14.

My husband's love of society often betrays him into company not congenial to his spirit. He has already formed an intimacy with several at L——, who have neither talents to please, nor humility enough to suppose their conversation can be disagreeable. Mr. Juvenal is a learned pedant, an ill-natured critic, and a literary coxcomb. — Mrs. Saunders is affectedly fond
of

of hard words, but exceedingly apt to misplace them. • Eternally making mistakes she is too ignorant to be sensible of, and too proud to permit others to rectify. — Her niece abounds with that kind of consequence which is more nearly allied to vanity than pride. Sprightly, without wit; loud, without depth; and fond of her person, without the smallest pretensions to admiration; continually finding fault with her own looks, purposely to extort praise from surrounding flatterers; and, withal, intolerably mischievous. — Soon as the necessary introductions were finished, she ran to the glass. — “ Bless me! how pale I look! What can possibly have occasioned the frightful alteration?”

“ Want of the usual succedaneum of a natural bloom,” replied the scholar, furlily, “ or perhaps chagrin for your disappointment.”

“ Lord, what disappointment?”

“ In missing a compliment from the company.”

"It is impossible," returned a stranger, "to *make a compliment* to that lady."

"You are *perdigiously* out," answered the mistaken Mrs. Saunders; "for every body compliments my niece."

Juvenal seemed to be preparing a bitter retort, but it was stifled by an unfortunate circumstance. Sitting exactly under a girandole, one of the candles projected forwards, so as almost to touch the back of his wig, which nearly resembled that of Sir Cloudesly Shovel, in Westminster-Abbey. Delighted to see the melted wax distilling down the different stories of curls, Miss Saunders meditated a more complete mortification to the unhappy cynic. She pushed the candle forward, which already hung in an oblique position, and it fairly tumbled into the well-combed peruque. Mr. Juvenal, sensible of an unusual warmth about his pericranium, shook his ears, tore off the smoking wig, and, assisted by my husband, trod out the blaze,

blaze, which had destroyed near half the venerable toupee. The ladies were in ecstasies; nor could Edward repress a smile, when Miss Saunders offered her calash as a substitute for the mutilated fragments. Not content with this display of her roguish talents, the young lass presented the poor gentleman a dish of coffee; he threw back her hand with disdain. This manœuvre, by a dexterous turn, tossed the scalding liquor over his cut-velvet waistcoat. He foamed with rage, as its effects were not confined to his cloaths only, and swore he would not sit near that young *Circe*.

"No more *saucy* than yourself," retorted the misconceiving aunt.

I pleaded for the frightened scholar, and, placing him near me, protected him from his intolerable plague.

The appearance of cards induced Mrs. Saunders devoutly to wish for better luck than she had at the assembly. "For, do

“you know,” turning to me, “I lost a
“*commensury*.” Edward caught at the
word, *assembly*, and concluded to go the
ensuing evening. —

When the company were departing,
Miss professed the utmost terror lest the
chaise should be overturned, as the road
was full of sloughs. “Pity but it would,”
grouled furly Juvenal.

“Lord, you cruel creature, suppose
“we got broken bones.”

“So much the better. — Then you may lie
“in bed and contrive mischief.” — So say-
ing, he went away, not complacent enough
to accompany the ladies. My Edward is in-
formed, this learned man is weak enough
to be secretly fond of the girl, who is ever
inventing methods to torment him.

Oh! sister, what society is this? I
thought not of the inconvenience, when
we first came down. — But they seem to
divert Wilmot, and that is a sufficient in-
ducement with me to bear their company.

Mrs.

Mrs. WILMOT in continuation.

We went last night to the assembly. — It is tolerably genteel; but, like most country meetings, distinguished by the unsocial behaviour of the town's-people. Their master of the ceremonies was totally ignorant of the etiquette of those places; partially, as well as rudely, introducing his intimates to those advantages politeness would have appropriated to strangers. We staid not long in the dancing-room, but adjourned to an apartment where several parties were engaged at cards. A voice I could have execrated struck my ear, the moment I entered. Oh! Louisa, think what a shock! My eye ran over the company, and I distinguished — *Ward!* — Sister, that man is born to be my torment. The flush of gratitude, mixed perhaps with conscious pride, crimsoned my husband's face, and he went immediately to the table to congratulate that *wretch!* You have styled me

a physiognomist—but not all my art could develope the deep mystery which contracted—(indeed, when do they expand?)—this fellow's features. — He doubtless meant to give them a cast of repulsive generosity that wished not to encounter the thanks his behaviour had excited. — But that treacherous dark turn of his countenance, which contradicts every endeavour to appear undesigning, intirely destroyed his attempts to deceive the unprejudiced. What reprehensible infatuation! How *can* a gentleman of Edward's delicacy condescend to associate with illiterate vulgarity? Ward's behaviour is coarse, though cringingly servile. His language improper; pronunciation inelegant; his dress, more assimilated to the turf than the drawing-room. Does not this betray a total want both of birth and education? There must be a charm (an invisible one) about him, that engages *Edward Wilmot's* partiality. I could
not

not depart without disgust, and even a renewal of my former forebodings.—Need I tell you *that* disgust and *those* forebodings were excited by being obliged to leave my husband in company with the man I detested.

Thank you, Louisa, for your punctuality. Sternheim arrived in safety this day. We have found him a comfortable retreat near our house. He is in raptures. — Cannot speak without tears. — Was much fatigued at first; — sat a few minutes, then rising, came to me, and, holding out a small shagreen case, “Receive, dear madam,” he said “the only token I can offer of reverential esteem. — It is the portrait of virtue; and, as such, becomes the property of her counterpart.” It was a miniature of Matilda.

“Yes, Mr. Sternheim, I will keep it till George goes abroad. It will be a welcome present to the young soldier.

“ But Harry shall not lose by it; you
“ must indulge him with *your* represent-
“ ation.”

“ Yes, madam,” said the little fellow,
“ — And, when I am going to begin an
“ engagement, the picture shall inspire
“ me. I will kiss it; and say, courage,
“ Harry; remember your noble father.
“ And then, madam, I shall be sure to
“ conquer.”

Admirable boy! How I love him! —
What an elegant figure is George! The
grateful youth would have knelt, to ex-
press his sense of what had been done for
his family, but I prevented him. He
then spoke so modestly, and yet with such
prophetic earnestness, of his future ex-
pectations, that his father was quite de-
lighted. My comely Harry, robust,
cheerful, and good-humoured, the glow
of health enlivening his handsome face,
made no ceremony, but, running to me,
before I was aware, clasped his arms a-
bout

bout my neck, and his kisses might have been heard almost to the gate. His brother blushed; his father frowned. The poor boy seemed confused; but, turning his sparkling eyes on me, "You are not angry, madam, are you? — I would not have been so bold, but indeed now you look so like my poor dear mother, that I thought I saw her before me. And I am sure I often used to kiss her."

This unexpected remark drove the blush from George's cheek, banished the frown from his father's brow, and called a tear into my eye.

"Harry," said I, "this is a terrible wet and windy night; will not such weather weaken your warlike inclinations?"

The lad looked very stern. "My father, madam, has endured greater perils than bad weather, and I" — (O how agitated

agitated he seemed!)—"and I am *his* son."

What an astonishing family! — Courage, without rashness; dignity of spirit, untainted by superciliousness; heroic firmness, tempered with the most delicate sensibility. George goes to London next week. Henry is to study navigation at L—, as the poor soldier cannot, with all his fortitude, part with both at once. But he shall not feel a distress which I can remove.

Mr. Wilmot is summoned to town. His brother, Louisa, from improper treatment of the wound he received at the Pantheon, labours under the most excruciating tortures. Without the least possibility of a cure, he is reduced to the dreadful necessity of enduring those miseries, which seem not to encourage the apprehension of a speedy release. The situation of Mrs. Tenby, who is supposed to be in a deep decline, adds to his wretchedness, and he is deprived of every solid comfort but that which he now claims from

from fraternal sympathy. That callous heart, which could once plan the most diabolical schemes to extort money, and which felt not compunction while suggesting the worst of robberies, can now feel no peace, but from the hope of receiving the tender offices of humanity from the brother he has wronged. And yet, we are told, repentance for past crimes torments him not so much as the dread of being no more. Shocking insensibility! Not yet awakened, though suffering under the consequence of past sins. Surely he must *feel*. He cannot long remain thus hardened. May heaven, in its goodness, pity and relieve the unhappy culprit.

Adieu, my dear; I must make the necessary preparations for Edward's journey. — He leaves me a task by no means easy, — that of consoling Sternheim, as George goes with my husband. — I will endeavour to comfort that excellent parent. — It will most probably have a good effect upon myself, by stifling the melancholy

lancholy sensations which might otherwise prevail, on being left at this critical period. — I shall send you what letters I receive. Once more, adieu, my sweet sister.

FRANCES WILMOT.

Mr. WILMOT to his Wife.

Soho, March 22.

IT will be more consonant to my dearest's wishes to relate my reception *here*, than to take up her attention by frivolous occurrences, which happen more or less to every traveller. I shall enter immediately then upon the subject of my errand. Arriving very late on Thursday evening, I would not go to Sir Henry till yesterday. The answers I received were ambiguous. The servant would have prevented me from going up till my arrival was announced; this startled me. I would not be hindered entering the room. I was thunder-struck at the scene which unexpectedly met my eyes. The curtains were
thrown

thrown back; Sir Henry, sitting almost upright, was supported by pillows; his countenance ghastly beyond expression. On a bed-table, which was placed before him, lay — *a pack of cards!* Oh! Fanny, how this appearance reminded me of my former infatuation. Though the severity of his pains urged a far different conduct, yet was the insensible creature thus criminally wasting the few remaining hours of an ill-spent life.—How inexcusably thoughtless! —In continual expectation of those pains which, I heard, in the last half hour, had torn his soul, and forced him to curse his existence, yet, no sooner is he sensible of a remission of torture, than he returns to what I can *now* call the most blameable folly. — One of his companions, the moment previous to my entrance, dealt the cards to Sir Henry and another person, who sat at the feet of the bed. My brother, by his confusion, seemed to wish I had protracted my visit till his companions

ions were withdrawn. However, he expressed much pleasure, upon the whole, at my presence, and, extending the hand he could use, drew me gently towards him. I was scarcely seated by his side, when the bishop of C—— was announced. He came in before the cards were removed, and, approaching the bed, “I came, sir,” said he “in consequence of a report which was made me of your melancholy situation. — *Melancholy*, indeed!” fixing an expressive eye upon the table; and my brother’s visitants. “Perhaps you would wish to see me at some more convenient season.” And again he glanced an indignant look upon the gaming apparatus. Grieved was I to observe, he softened not the austerity of his countenance when his eyes rested upon me. Sir Henry was aiming at an awkward apology, for what could not be excused, when the bishop, waving his hand, “I leave you for the present, sir. Should
“ *time*

"time be allowed, you may yet feel the necessity of my company." So saying he left the room, without one answer to the respectful address I articulated! I felt myself ashamed, mortified, and disappointed. But this was no time to express my vexation.

"What a queer old prig is that?" observed one of the wretches. "As if a man must be always praying, whining, or accusing himself of little youthful errors, upon a sick bed."

He was interrupted by a terrifying groan from my brother, occasioned by the renewal of his pains. The gentlemen instantly arose, and, without uttering *one* expression of pity, sorrow, or consolation, fled the unhappy creature.

"Thus," he exclaimed, "I am always served, when these horrid pangs assail me, and have only the nurses to witness my agonies. These pretended friends always desert me, or shut
"the ir

“their ears to my complaints. . Oh!
“good God of heaven, give me instant
“ease, or I must die! — Lord have mer-
“cy on me, Edward, what will be the
“end of this? — Nay, shed no tears. —
“I want relief, not compassion. — And
“yet you might. — There, again. — I
“am tearing to pieces. — Take off the
“dressings, I tell you.”

Frances, the sweat rolled off his face in large drops. He clenched the sheet with his hand, drew up his legs, and screamed with such violence as denoted strength sufficient to bear more of these dreadful paroxysms. I was incapable of speech. — He turned his despairing eyes upon me, and remained silent for some moments; when, again renewing his cries, he called out. — “Where are the sur-
“geons? Sure they might find something
“to give me partial ease.”

One of his attendants offered an opiate. He dashed it from him. — “I am tired
“of

“ of that stuff. — It does no good ; only
“ stupifies without relief.”

“ Take it, my dear brother,” said I.
“ It may induce a cessation of your mi-
“ fery.”

He looked at me, tears falling upon
the pillow. — “ Ah ! Edward, I shall die
“ a miserable death. — However, give
“ me the medicine. — Quickly. — Oh !
“ it comes again.”

He took the soporiferous draught, and,
after several distortions, wearied with
agony, fell asleep. And this, I am told,
is the usual termination to his heart-rend-
ing pangs. The surgeons inform me,
they are in consequence of a swelling (pro-
duced by his bad habit of body) near the
wound, and which resists all their endea-
vours to reduce or bring forward.

A letter lying on the ground, I gave it
to the housekeeper to lock up.

“ That letter, sir,” said she, “ put
“ my master in great distress, yesterday.

“ But all signifies nothing. — He is one
 “ hour dying, and the next will call for
 “ cards. — Sometimes he will be sorry for
 “ poor Mrs. Tenby, and soon after, per-
 “ haps, say, she brought him to this.
 “ But, for all that, he is certainly very
 “ fond of her.”

As the paper was unsealed, I ventured
 to read as follows.

Mrs. TENBY to Sir HENRY WILMOT.

Highbgate.

THERE *was* a time, Sir Henry,
 when, rendered callous by success-
 ful guilt, lulled by the artful pleadings of
 the man I loved, gay and thoughtless
 from situation, I had no conception that
 wretchedness was to terminate the deceit-
 ful prospect. — Beauty, even frozen age
 allowed me. Spirit I wanted not. A
 fond mistaken husband convinced me of
 my power to please. — Alas! the guilty
 Eliza convinced him, how well she could
 deceive.

deceive. — Health, confirmed and uninterrupted, gilded every scene ; and, while the world was loud in its reproach, I felt it not, so long as luxurious splendor hid the fatal consequence of my criminal attachment, so long as sleep prevented retrospection's visits to my pillow. — There is a time, — and oh ! how soon arrived ! — when the curtain undraws, and discovers,—sickness,—agonizing conviction,—sorrow for the past, —dread of futurity, and the reproaches of a murdered husband's spirit ! — When, wearied by pain, and harrassed with the incessant prattle of my only companion, I strive, in midnight solitude, to lose the remembrance of irremediable evils, then is my imagination tormented with the image of poor Tenby ; then do I behold him, sometimes frantic, expressing all the horrors of raging lunacy ; sometimes pale, emaciated, dying. — Last night, in dreams, I saw him, holding in either hand holding a lovely infant,

infant, such as they were when forsaken by a cruel mother. His eyes beamed alternately pity and reproach. I gazed upon them in idea;—my blood seemed chilled. Methought he spoke words that petrified me.

“Prepare, unhappy woman, prepare.

“—Perhaps it is not too late.”

Are not *these* visions enough to unsettle my brain, already weak from illness?

How is it with you, Sir Henry? Do *you* feel such horrors? They say you are dangerously ill. Salutory be your pain. Let me adopt the words my fancy made Orlando speak. Let *me* say, “*It is not too late.*” Sinner as I have been, permit *me* to urge the necessity of sincere repentance. The delirium, that has so long clouded our reason, must render such repentance difficult. Yet heaven may, I trust, be supplicated. Are there no means of retribution left, Sir Henry? It is true, *you* cannot enrich a ruined brother; nor *I* recover

recover a broken-hearted husband from the grave. — Yet, may we not, by unfeigned penitence, atone, in some measure, for our crimes? *You can* recover a faultless wife; you *can* release her from an unjust confinement, and restore her to her natural right. *She* will attend the bed of languishing; *she* will listen to and alleviate, by her sweet attention, your piteous complaints. So far *is* retribution in your power. By acting thus, you will deprive death of part of his terrors, and it is possible soften the rigour of the divine sentence. — Never shall my orisons be put up without an earnest petition for Henry Wilmot. — Forget not, in *your* prayers, the repenting

ELIZA TENBY.

Mr. WILMOT in continuation.

I shall make no comments on this letter. — My mind is disturbed. — We are yet to be the sport of fortune. — How mal-

a-propos ! to be seen by the bishop in a moment so critical ! I went this morning to his lordship's house ; just saw the *back* of his travelling-chaise. The servants were mounted ; his family-coach was at the door, for the purpose of conveying the female domestics and luggage. I enquired for their master. — He was gone to his diocese. — Unlucky ! that I cannot clear myself. Appearances will now condemn me. Our friend, noble as he is, has a tincture of obstinacy in his composition. He will not believe I could be a spectator *only* at the card-table, too well knowing my former propensity. And then, how horrid to suppose I was encouraging a dying brother in his lethargic carelessness ! He *must* think me guilty of the unnatural wickedness. It looked like it. The cards were dealt ; — just four of us, — could he imagine I was not to join the party ? I will write, but must wait
for

for an answer, as he generally makes visits upon the road.

I have written, Frances. May his lordship be convinced of my innocence. — And now to other business. I have attended your young soldier to Lord D—. He was received with that affability so encouraging to a modest youth, and is delighted at the idea of passing some months at this nobleman's house. What a change, my dearest! A simple cottage for the stately apartments in Piccadilly. — The luxuriant oak for a richly decorated study. — He was particularly pleased with the globes, maps, &c. which adorn the library, and proposes much satisfaction to himself in acquiring a general knowledge of the sciences. Fortification is already familiar to him. — I thought his remark, when introduced to this elegant repository, was natural.

“ I have often,” said he, “ enjoyed my
“ father's reflections upon the heavenly
G 4 “ bodies,

“bodies, on a clear night; but how
 “much more delightful will it be, to give
 “those instructions to others I once so
 “greedily received.”

Lord D—— was pleased, and thanked me for the acquisition I had brought him. — Adieu, my Fanny. Your Edward hopes to receive news from Brenchley that will compensate for every uneasiness. Mrs. Medway's visit to you is particularly fortunate at this period. E. W.

Mrs. MEDWAY to EDWARD WILMOT.

SIR, *Brenchley, March 3.*

I Am commissioned by our dear Mrs. Wilmot to congratulate you on the birth of a son, and its mother's safety. She wishes much to see you upon the happy occasion. I am, sir, your most obedient servant, E. MEDWAY,

Mr.

Mr. WILMOT to Mrs. MEDWAY.

March, 5

HOW equally does providence dispense good and evil. A letter from the bishop has mortified and disappointed your friend; a note from Mrs. Medway cheers his desponding spirits. Convey, dearest madam, my warmest felicitations to our beloved Frances upon an event so long wished. Nothing but Sir Henry's dreadful situation should keep me one moment from Brenchley. — *His* sufferings will, I am sure, plead sufficient excuse for my absence. Soon, *very* soon, will that inducement cease. I shall continue my communications, but must entreat you to read such passages only as my beloved's tender mind, at this delicate period, may easily bear. I shall send my letter to Lord C—— and his unpropitious answer.

Mr.

EDWARD WILMOT *to the Bishop of C—.*

March, 11.

IMPATIENT to exculpate himself from the suspicion of a detestable crime, Edward Wilmot presumes to offer an explanation of a late transaction. Yes, my lord, your penetrating eye and cold behaviour seemed to reproach me as the wretched abettor of an unhappy brother's weakness; but my heart was too much overwhelmed at the melancholy sight to *think* of countenancing the fatal error. I had not been five minutes in the room when your lordship entered, and was perfectly free from the smallest intention of rendering myself unworthy the bishop of C—'s friendship, which no one could deserve who possesses a soul capable of such baseness. May the return of post convince me I am again reinstated in your lordship's good opinion, which will give the highest pleasure to the grateful and obedient

EDWARD WILMOT.

The

The Bishop of C—— to EDWARD WIL-
MOT, Esq.

Chilton-Grove.

TILL something more convincing than *your* asseverations shall transpire, I must still believe the evidence of sight. Would to God Mr. Wilmot could remove that prejudice which has left him no interest in *my* bosom but pity for the best and most unfortunate of *women*.

The shocking scene I beheld in Sir Henry's chamber precludes every *hope* of being deceived in *your* conduct. A *dying* brother supported in the most hardened behaviour by *him* who should have tenderly represented the fatal consequence of such terrible blindness! Horrid thought! Oh! that you could indeed *exculpate* yourself from the well grounded suspicion. But it is impossible. Never can you regain the confidence of

E. C——.

Mr.

Mr. WILMOT in continuation.

I depend upon my good Mrs. Medway to keep this cruel epistle at present to herself, and will now change the subject.

I have, at the earnest entreaty of Sir Henry, had an interview with Mrs. Tenby. She expressed much reluctance to be seen by a stranger, and it was with infinite difficulty I was admitted. How striking is the difference between her and my brother! In *him* we see, even when *most* penetrated, a fullen reluctance. His confessions are extorted by agony, and his repentance created by the disappointment of his favourite views. Slight and superficial are his promises of amendment, for they are immediately forgotten, when no longer under the influence of pain. If, in a tranquil moment, he talks of past errors, you would imagine him speaking of misfortunes brought on by others misconduct, *not his own*. Should he touch upon the inhuman treatment lady Wilmot has endured, he slightly observes, their separation

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tion and her confinement were the consequence of a growing insanity, which made her society troublesome, if not dangerous. Such are the effects of *transient* remorse, and a native propensity to evil. Far contrary to these are the conduct and sentiments of a *woman* who once excited only contempt. Too weak to rise, she pointed to a chair, and, in answer to my enquiries into the state of her health, burst into tears.

“Excuse me, sir,” she said. “But to hear
 “that *you* are interested in *my* welfare is
 “what I am unable to support. Indeed,
 “I ought to have been denied. — In
 “compassion to my situation, Mr. Wil-
 “mot should not have been introduced.
 “For can it be supposed, the presence of
 “*him*, who owes his ruin in part to my
 “extravagance, will induce ought but
 “self-accusation and torturing shame?”

“Think not of any thing, madam, but
 “the speediest means of recovery. You
 “may

"may yet enjoy years of comfort, unem-
 "bittered by that ingenuous shame, you
 "acknowledge."

"Speak not of comfort to *me*, sir.
 "Loaded with infamy and tormented with
 "the fatal effects of my rash ungovern-
 "able passion, from what or whom can I
 "desire peace? Merciful heaven, in
 "pity to a repentant sinner, shorten her
 "days of misery. — In dreams, I see the
 "unfortunate sacrifice to my wretched-
 "ness. Waking, I now behold an inno-
 "cent victim to combined treachery.
 "Tell me, Mr. Wilmot, are you yet a-
 "ware of the complicated mischief that
 "has been practised against you? Do you
 "know the extent of Ward's baseness?"

"I know Mr. Ward's love of gaming;
 "but I also know he has acted generously
 "by me."

"*Generously!* Oh! God! What a
 "perversion of words! Basely, vilely,
 "deceitfully,

"deceitfully, has he acted; and are you
 "yet ignorant, poor man?"

"What means Mrs. Tenby? What
 "mystery is this?"

"I think, sir, you are pretty largely in-
 "debted to that fellow."

"About £600, madam."

She shook her head indignantly. —

"You gave a note for that sum?"

"For six thousand, Mrs. Tenby: five
 "thousand four hundred of which are
 "paid."

"Has Ward given up the note?"

"Why no; but I have taken receipts
 "for the money."

"Upon stamped paper?"

"No. My confidence in him rendered
 "it unnecessary. Besides, there are pro-
 "per memorandums upon the obliga-
 "tion."

"Have you lately seen that note?"

"I have not. Had there been any col-
 "lusion, would not his demand have
 "been

“been made when my affairs were settled?”

“No, sir; he had more dependence upon *your* generosity than upon the blindness of those you employed to arrange that business. Had Ward claimed his debt, he could not have recovered perhaps more than the real sum. But now, from the nobleness of your disposition, he expects —”

She was going on, but, sinking back in her chair, seemed incapable of farther explanation, and I quitted her reluctantly. — Surely fate will not again plunge us in calamity. Ward *cannot* be guilty of such villainy. He is now in town; but I can do nothing in this affair till the demand is made, and will not puzzle myself farther. Time and Jacob Ward will soon render the matter sufficiently clear. — Adieu, my respectable friend. — Adieu, my lovely wife.

— EDWARD WILMOT.

Mrs.

Mrs. WILMOT to EDWARD WILMOT, Esq.

March 20.

I Would not suffer Mrs. Medway to conceal one line of your letter. Dearest Edward, are not your pains, your pleasures, mine? Have you not proved my fortitude in the most perilous situations? And can you doubt me *now*? Is Ward a villain? No matter; in me you have a tender faithful friend. Does our revered benefactor forsake us? Be it so. Thy Frances shall, by fond attention, soothe and lessen thy grief for such ill-fortune. Does *all* mankind frown on my husband? His Fanny's face, for ever dressed in smiles, shall compensate for such injustice. Come home, dear Wilmot. Our little stranger shall smile on his parent. What is the world's opinion? What its censure? In this retirement nought can hurt us. Come, my heart's treasure, and rejoice with your

FRANCES WILMOT.

Mrs. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

Brenchley, April 10.

MORE trouble, my sister, and from an unexpected quarter. But who can oppose heaven's decrees? Patience then be my refuge. And now to the afflicting circumstance.

Walking yesterday through the park, in a situation hard to describe, a mixture of pain and pleasure agitating my mind, I was awakened from deep meditation by the violent emotions of my only companion, Cæsar. — He darted from my side, barking as he flew, and, in two minutes, came from behind the oaks with — my beloved husband! The poor animal jumping, whining, licking his master's hand, with the most natural demonstration of his lively joy: — Yes, sister, it was my Wilmot. — Delightful interview! I could hardly express my happiness. — Edward was enchanted with his beautiful boy, and thanked me in the tenderest manner for

the

the invaluable present. We proposed to ourselves a felicitous tête-à-tête, uninterrupted, calm, and social; but our scheme was cruelly broken by the arrival of Mrs. Saunders, her niece, and consequently Juvenal. I was mortified. — Deprived, too, of Mrs. Medway's assistance. — Her sprightly talents are an excellent foil to the ignorant Saunders, and book-learned cynic; for even *he* was obliged to submit to her superior powers; but she departed yesterday morning.

Soon as they were seated, the scholar took a newspaper from his pocket, and began to read an article which, he said, had greatly shocked him. Too like the unthinking part of mankind, whose love of surprise often gets the better of humanity, and whose eagerness to raise astonishment makes it immaterial whether the subject be a birth or a death, a wedding or a shipwreck. Juvenal saw us happy, and wished to convert the smile

of satisfaction to a look of horror and pity. Yet is he not hard-hearted or envious. — We were all attention, little imagining what was to follow. He then read, “Last Thursday, a gentleman was attacked, in a post-chaise, upon Marlborough-Downs, by three highwaymen, who, perceiving he was not able, through terror, to get down the glass, shot him through the head. — We are since informed the deceased was the reverend bishop of C——.”

I was speechless and motionless. Good God! had I not reason? Our venerable bishop, gracious, generous, and noble, who had wiped the tear from affliction's eye, restored peace to the unhappy, and was in the practice of every virtue that could adorn the Christian, friend, and real gentleman, thus diabolically to be torn from his children, as he once fondly styled us! At *such* a time, too, when misapprehension, strengthened by unfavourable appearance s

appearances, had weakened his opinion of my husband's goodness. This was a shock indeed. — Juvenal, who knew not how deeply interested we were in this deplorable accident, seemed to think he had done mischief, without knowing how; and, rising awkwardly, took that leave we were in no condition to grant or deny. The ladies followed his example, declaring they should be too late for the assembly. — Mrs. Saunders, conceiving our grief originated from an imperfect knowledge of the prelate, (for Edward was apparently distressed,) “Hoped time would *releviate* our concern, and was *commencely* sorry for the misfortune.” What ignorance! What inhumanity!

How did the sweet satisfaction we felt vanish at this dreadful account! No shadow of deception! It was apparently truth indisputable.

“My Fanny,” said the unhappy Wilmot, “there is an evil yet behind, the

"bare supposition of which fills me with
 "terror. I have no legal writing to se-
 "cure my title to this estate. — Should
 "the bishop's executors be deficient in
 "the greatness of soul which distinguished
 "that excellent man, we must again be
 "exposed to evils melancholy to imagine.
 "My innocent babe, my angelic wife,
 "may yet have reason to curse the care-
 "lessness of him who should have been
 "their support."

I endeavoured to discourage an idea
 which carried wretchedness in its concep-
 tion, but he would not be comforted. —
 Good night, my dearest Louisa; may
 heaven turn these misfortunes to our ad-
 vantage.

FRANCES WILMOT.

Mrs. WILMOT in continuation.

April 12.

MY husband, pursuant to a hasty re-
 solution, is this morning set off for
 London. It is necessary, sister, to know
 our

our fate. — He entreats, if there be a possibility of my father's prosecuting the journey, that he will accompany you to Brenchley. — I am aware of the seeming selfishness that predominates in this request, as the dear man must still be weak, in consequence of his late gouty attack; but perhaps various perplexities have narrowed my heart, which once felt more keenly for the calamities of its friends than for its own; and it is likely your Frances may think more of the consolation she shall receive from your company, than the inconveniences that may attend her father's journey hither. — Disappoint not my expectations, Louisa; nor you, dear sir, refuse to visit a dutiful daughter, a blooming grandson. F. W.

*The Rev. Mr. JENKINS to Mrs. WILMOT.
Crawford-Abbey, April 15.*

I Will visit Brenchley, sweetest and most amiable of women; but I must go alone.

lone. My kind Louisa attends lady O— into Wales, and expects to stay some time at Llewellyn-Castle. She would have seen you first, but her ladyship must be obliged, You know my reasons for obeying lady O—. I need not say, her uncle was my patron. However, your father will strive to comfort his child. If he cannot by cheerful, he may at least by soothing, converse, lessen her well-grounded anxiety. Adieu, my love, — Louisa sends every tender wish by

SAMUEL JENKINS.

Mr. WILMOT to his Wife.

London, April 18.

HOW complex, how retrograde, how various, are thy Wilmot's affairs! At one period, involved in the deepest distress from an ardent pursuit of folly; soon after, miraculously raised by the benevolent intervention of exalted friendship; and then, when in possession of the blessings of peace and tranquility, thrown

back

back into a state of turbulence, confusion, and perhaps poverty.

Were I ignorant of thy unexampled patience, did not every vicissitude convince me of thy equanimity, not incautiously would I relate events which prove the instability of sublunary happiness.

It is a fact, my dear, that we have again lost the means of subsistence. The bishop is *no more*. Death has been particularly severe in depriving us of such a friend. Would to God I had seen him, before the fatal stroke was given. Surely, his conduct, in refusing to believe your Edward favours of caprice. But let me not arraign so excellent a mind. Be silent, too busy pen, on the ungrateful subject.

I have been to Portman-Square, The melancholy atchievement convinced me of our misfortune, and I had hardly power to announce my business. Mr. Smith, the bishop's steward, met me at the door with marks of the deepest concern, and related the manner

ner

ner of his death with a faltering voice. The porter dropped a tear at the recital, and, shaking his hoary head, sobbed out:

“ We have *indeed* lost the best of masters; but I shall soon follow him.”

Every menial servant seemed spiritless and sorrowful. A melancholy stillness reigned through the house. Frances, the bishop was revered in his diocese, beloved by his friends, and worshipped in his family. His executor, Sir Richard Risdale, arrived while I was there. He conducted me to the library, and, after compliments of condolence, entered upon business.

“ I think, Mr. Wilmot, the estate you now live upon was made over to you during the bishop’s pleasure.”

“ I have a letter, sir,” (producing it) “ which confirms the grant.”

“ A letter, sir, is of no consequence. Have you not some more legal testimony of the donation?”

“ No

"No, Sir Richard."

"What, no agreement, properly drawn
"and witnessed, upon stamped paper?"

"This appears an unnecessary question,
"when I tell you *this* letter is my only
"security.— You will here perceive he
"gives me every reason to suppose it an
"absolute *gift*."

"No such thing, Mr. Wilmot; your
"title is nugatory. I am the bishop's
"executor and residuary legatee; in fact,
"his only heir; entitled to every estate,
"real or personal. You cannot therefore
"expect me to give up such an important
"acquisition."

He arose, seemingly with impatience,
as if wishing my absence. I said, but
with reluctance, "Sir Richard, you will
"not insist upon my quitting the pre-
"mises till the crops are off the ground."

"By no means, Mr. Wilmot; but my
"rent

“rent must commence from the day of his
“lordship’s funeral.”

“What rent, sir?”

“Five hundred a year.”

“You *must* know, *that* estate, when in
“my hands before, produced but £400.
“I have laid out considerable sums upon
“improvements, which are now totally
“sunk. — But I leave you, unworthy
“successor of my revered friend.”

He turned about, with a most contemptuous sneer, “Had Mr. Wilmot
“been *always* thus provident, he would
“not now have been without an estate.
“But if my claim deprive him of subsist-
“ence, the *gaming* table may prove a for-
“tunate resource.”

Oh! Frances, do you not pity your
husband? I felt a tear of anguish scald my
cheek; and, boiling passion preventing
utterance, I left him abruptly.—Haughty,
purse-proud, illiberal, Risdale, thus to
triumph

triumph in the misery he was about to inflict.

Mr Smith saw me on the stairs; we went to his room. The good creature said, "I fear, sir, you have been vext."

I told him the story. He sighed; spoke not for some moments; at last he said, "Indeed, sir, we have all as much reason to lament Sir Richard's avarice as our dear master's death. But, my worthy sir," (shutting the door, and lowering his voice,) "forgive me for saying, you would not have been reduced to the necessity of enduring this treatment, had it not been for an unlucky accident."

I was all attention.

"You remember, sir, meeting with my lord, one day, at Sir Henry Wilmot's?"

"I remember it perfectly, Mr. Smith."

"Well, he came home vastly disturbed, and called me into his closet. " Smith

' said

‘ said he, I have been cruelly deceived.
‘ Affection for Mrs. Wilmot, and pity
‘ for her *infatuated* husband,’ (pardon
me, sir; they were his very words,) ‘ oc-
‘ casioned a liberality I have reason to
‘ repent. I have seen that man in a situ-
‘ ation which calls almost for hatred;
‘ playing at cards with *a dying brother*. —
‘ I meant to have set him above the
‘ frowns of the world, and thought this
‘ day to have settled that estate upon him,
‘ but must now wait more favourable
‘ appearances.’ “ He set out soon after,
“ and *never* more returned alive.

Dearest Fanny, *that* visit, undertaken with
the purest motives, has proved our ruin.
My brother, living or dying, intention-
ally or innocently, works our destruction.

I am interrupted by a message from him,
requesting my presence. Perhaps the
awful period is at hand. I saw a visible
alteration in him yesterday. His pains con-
tinue, but his strength is almost gone.

How

How is our good father and Louisa? I hope they are with you, Detain them, if possible, till my return. Adieu, my dearest.

EDWARD WILMOT.

Mrs. WILMOT to her husband

Brenchley, April, 20.

TA X not your faithful Fanny with insensibility, when she declares herself less affected with this last disappointment than worldly prudence may authorise. Dear Edward, there are many beings who cannot, in such a situation, boast our advantages. — There are yet resources, which occasion may call forth, perfectly adequate to our necessities. You will not wonder at my language, when I tell you, the tender soothings and well calculated arguments of our kind father have consoled and cheered my troubled spirit. Poor Louisa is gone to Wales with lady O—. But I have the company of my good friend Sternheim; he comes daily
to

to chat with his venerable friend. Harry, too, pays *me* frequent visits, and expresses great fondness for our little Edward. — Can I despair, while blessed with my husband's love, rich in the possession of several valuable friends, and happy in the innocent smiles of a lovely boy? But I must unwillingly bid adieu, as the post is going out. Adieu, then, my ever dear Edward.

FRANCES WILMOT.

Mr. WILMOT to his Wife.

April, 24.

I Wait but for the arrangement of a momentous concern, and then, farewell London. — A *concern*, my love, that must affect your gentle heart. My brother is dying. — Sensible at intervals. — Need I say, those intervals are terrible. Mrs. Tenby has been informed of his situation, and expresses a wish to see him. She sends to request I will accompany her to the dying man. Poor thing, she must suffer greatly,

greatly, as well as her miserable paramour.

Mr. WILMOT in continuation.

April 25.

I Could not write last night. Indeed, I was almost senseless. — No wonder. — Arm yourself, my dearest, for a shocking recital. Imagine how awful must be the interview between two people whose ruin is the consequence of their joint vices. Paint to your feeling mind the effects of pain, remorse, and fear. View a dying helpless creature, tormented by bodily pangs and harrassed by the presence of a woman on whom he fondly doated, now reduced by his means to sickness and penury. Yet will your imagination fall short of the scene I am about to describe.

I had been but ten minutes in Sir Henry's room, when Mrs. Tenby entered, supported by her landlady, and was led to a chair by the bed. He was then dozing.

VOL. II.

I

Throwing

Throwing open the curtain, she fixed her eyes upon a face on which were imprinted the marks of death. Tears dropped upon his pillow as she leant over him, gazing in anguish upon his altered person; then, clasping her hands, she softly uttered, "Wretched man!"

The nurses and her landlady were retired. — Sir Henry awoke, with a hollow groan. Unable to turn his debilitated body, he could only move his head towards the side on which Mrs. Tenby was seated. A sudden burst of grief from the unhappy woman alarmed him. He strained to look that way, and her emaciated person caught his eye.

"Who is that?" said he, with quickness. — "Speak."

She could not; but, falling on her knees, covered her face with the sheet and sobbed in extreme agony. Then, lifting up her head, took his hand and kissed it.

“I know her,” he exclaimed. “Why comes she here to witness my tortures? — Ha! Eliza! — Oh! who has given thee such an appearance? Take her away, Wilmot.” — Then, interrupting himself, — “When will these pains have an end? Merciless and almost unintermitted. Where is the bishop? He promised to pray by me. — But let him not come. — I cannot bear his babbling. — These dreadful twitchings — will not let me talk.”

The pain affected his breath, and he could only, for some minutes, express his impatience by short sobs and convulsive heavings. This raving fit ended as usual in a kind of stupor. Recovering a little, he gazed at the poor invalid, who was almost petrified at his exclamations, and he faintly said, “Unfortunate Eliza! why came you here?”

Gaining courage from his seeming tranquility, she answered.

“ I came, Sir Henry, hoping to profit
“ by your *sincere* repentance. I came to
“ offer up my fervent petition both with
“ and for you. Believe the distressed Ten-
“ by, when she declares her mind to be
“ as truly altered as her person. — You
“ but now asked the assistance of a minis-
“ ter, permit me, for the present, to sup-
“ plicate heaven for pardon and peace.”

“ If,” said he “ you could — procure
“ me — bodily ease.”

She appeared shocked. — “ Oh!
“ thoughtless man! Why thus hardened,
“ Wilmot? *Thou must die!*”

He seemed confused, vexed, and an-
gry. “ Is this, madam, *your* mode of
“ comfort?” Then, speaking to me,

“ Brother, is there no hope?”

I would not deceive him. He looked
wildly round the room, then, half closing
his eyes, apparently meditated deeply.
We were happy to see him so calm. At
length, speaking with great difficulty, —

“ I

"I would — not depart — as — an unbeliever ; — though — no puritan. —
"Tell me, — do you think — me near
"my end ? — Oh God !"

I told him the truth. He trembled violently, and was again silent.

"If," said he to me, "you suppose —
"a — minister's attendance necessary, —
"send — for one."

I gave orders for Dr. E—— to be sent for. Sir Henry sighed bitterly, looked at Mrs. Tenby in silent distress, then faintly articulated,—"My poor Eliza ! — I have
"indeed undone thee ! — No recompence !" —

He burst into tears, and went on. —
"Conviction, — late — and painful — as it
"is, strikes — my heart. — Oh ! great —
"and good God ! — Must I *die* ? — If there
"be — an hereafter ! — Oh ! that doubt —
"distracts me. — Tenby, thou hast repented, — pray for *me*." — Then, exalting his voice, between a complaining and

passionate tone, "Pray for me—this
" minute.—Lose not—a moment. My
" heart—strings will—break.—Kneel,
" —implore.—God of mercy!"

We knelt *indeed*, and fervently intreated
heaven to shorten his sufferings.—He
again broke out,—“My *wife!* innocent,
" —deserted,—abused.”—Then, starting,
as if upon recollection of some fatal evil,
“Come here,” said he to me, with a
quick but faltering voice,—“Come here,
" I say.—Not an injury—has—been done
" —to others,—but—has to—you been
" —doubled.—Brother, there is—a
" secret.—Ward is——O—h!”

Frances, the secret *died* with him; for
that moment he breathed his last. Poor
Mrs. Tenby, overcome by this sudden
termination of his miseries, fell into vio-
lent hysterics. Her complaints, when she
recovered, were pathetic; her behaviour,
rational and affecting.—She departed, ap-
parently

parently worse for being witness to my brother's death.

The clergyman, with Ward, entered the room at the moment of his decease. — The contraction of his features, the unsettled hue of his countenance, his distorted limbs, and eyes half-closed, rendered him a dreadful object indeed. — *The gamester trembled!* — Nay, I saw a *tear!* — But it was secretly wiped off. — Oh! may the ghastly appearance of this once gay companion produce a proper effect on that unsteady being.

My brother's affairs are in a shocking situation. Your husband is a baronet without *one* acre of estate, for it is totally out of his power to pay off the heavy mortgage, which is, I find, adequate to fifteen year's rent. My brother shall be buried with the utmost privacy. I will then endeavour to regulate his concerns; though it is impossible to put them upon a comfortable footing, as there are several

weighty debts, which must remain unpaid till time shall enable me to release his memory from infamous reflections. In ten days I hope to embrace my amiable wife, her aged parent, and her lovely boy. Ever your's,

EDWARD WILMOT.

P.S. I forgot to inform you, that our favourite, Ferguson, is daily expected from Lisbon, whither he went with a consumptive friend.

Lady F. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

Brenchley, May 3.

CONGRATULATE your sister, my dearest, upon the arrival of her beloved husband; ever welcome, but now more peculiarly so, from the embarrassment of our circumstances.—Our meeting was what might be expected from two hearts so truly in unison.

Interrupted already.—So; Mrs. Saunders insists upon our presence at a card-party

party this evening. — My Edward seems inclinable to attend her. — I must not let him go alone. — Adieu for the present.

Lady WILMOT in continuation.

May 4.

I mean now to comply with your positive injunction to discriminate still more particularly the characters of our L—— acquaintance. — We went rather late. — Think, Louisa, of seven card-tables in one comparatively *small* room at this season of the year. It was absolutely doing penance. Mrs. Saunders came up to me.

“Do you know, I’m *commencely* glad to see you, madam. — Nothing but *ill luck* the whole evening.”

“Does that lady’s appearance complete your ill-fortune?” observed Juvenal, who is seldom absent from Miss Saunders.

“Do but hear the creature, he is always *critilising* one’s words.”

“Oh!

"Oh! Jephtha," exclaimed the philosopher, "what a treasure hadst thou!"

"Still harping on my *niece*, as *Milton* says."

I really laughed at the lady's blunder; and, from the gentleman's remark, was convinced he had surrendered his heart to the little Circe, as he once not improperly styled her. I was still farther grounded in this notion before we departed. Edward directed my attention to some lasses, who had squeezed themselves into a bow-window seat, and were laughing immoderately at a paper Miss Saunders was reading. Observing me, she left off, and, holding it out, "See, madam, what a prize! Nothing less than a love-letter from Mr. Juvenal!" Then, leaving the enviable morsel in my hands, she flew to her aunt, to proclaim her precious conquest. Did you ever see a literary curiosity, my dear? If not, prepare to indulge

rifibility,

rifibility, for, if any phænomenon, can excite it, the following must, I am sure.

Mr. JUVENAL to Miss SAUNDERS.

Madam,

IT is totally impossible to disincarcerate my heart, which can never be reguerdoned for its effraible sufferings but by a conjunction with the Cleopatra of my wishes. Permit me, then, without a particle of deceit, to address you as the noun substantive of beauty, the diamond of Golconda, the clove of Cinnabar, the extract of Potosi's mine, and the ruby of inestimable price! Extrude me not, madam, from your favour. Alas! your cruel treatment speaks not even esteem. Oh! do not, by the slightest increpation, damp my passion, which, like a cataclysm, overwhelms reason. Should the step I have taken be anomalous to general custom, let your superlative goodness allow for what may appear but an adumbration of love,
nor

nor think it proceeds from incogitancy, but rather from the effervescence of that affection which is now at its exacerbation, Consent, then, to a speedy adunation, which will dispel the obtenebration of his ideas, who is, notwithstanding your severity, the adoring

HORATIO JUVENAL.

Omnia vincit amor, et nos cedamus amori.

Lady WILMOT in continuation.

May 5.

IS it not amazing, that a man, who is possessed of real learning, should so far lose himself as to dictate such an incomprehensible epistle to a girl so immersed in the gay world, as to mind little else than cards and dress, hearts and darts, Cupids and flames?

I do not think the British museum can boast a rarity equal to this Juvenal. I-
rascible by nature, proud of his knowledge, and delighting in contradiction, he

is

is fit for no place but his study, nor any company but snarling philosophers; and yet, to prove the power of our sex, this man is the dupe of a conceited lass, who encourages him, merely to establish her consequence with her *less fortunate* companions. — More than once did she make the poor lover feel ridiculous. — He was sitting near me, little imagining his curious epistle had been exposed; for, during his *Cleopatra's* triumph, her ill-fated adorer had been drawn aside by some person who wanted him. — She advanced with the utmost gravity, and begged leave to observe, there was an essential accompaniment wanting to the elaborate declaration she had that evening received from him. — Colouring and biting his lips, he demanded, with an ill-concealed captiousness, what she meant? “Nothing but a *dictionary*,” answered the little vixen. “Well, well,” he replied,

Ὑπομονὴ ἐστὶν Ἀρετὴ.*

See,

* Patience is a virtue.

See, Louisa, I have not quite forgot the language our good fathertaught us.

Soon after, Sir Edward bid me observe a stately figure, who entered, late as it was, with an air of extreme consequence. — Mrs. Saunders, after paying due attention to this visitor, approached, much fluttered.

“Do you know,” said she, in a low voice, “yonder is the great Creole, “’squire Sloper? — He seems to take particular notice of Maria, and paid her “*such* a compliment.”

“Paid a compliment to Maria, madam,” said the irritated Juvenal, “what “pretensions can he have to —”

“I believe,” interrupted she, “his “pretensions are as good as your’s, though “he may not be able to *constrain* Greek; “but,” speaking to my husband, why “so silent? Are you studying for a “speech out of *Homo* and *Virgin*? O dear, “here comes the great man!” — *Great* indeed,

deed, Louisa, for his looks indicated contempt and self-sustained pride.—Fixing an eye of awakened curiosity upon Sir Edward, his lips moved, as if impelled by some sudden impulse, but the half-formed words died away inarticulately, he appeared confused, and would have left the room, but my husband, much surprised, took his hand, and, gazing steadfastly at him, — “ Pardon ” he said “ a
 “ stranger’s free address. I am not liable
 “ to a conduct that calls for explanation,
 “ but Mr. Sloper’s features have raised
 “ emotions in my bosom, which perhaps
 “ his tongue may suppress. — Do me the
 “ honour, sir, of a moment’s conference
 “ in the next room.” — Mrs. Saunders, conducted us into another apartment, for Wilmot chose I should accompany them. When the lady was withdrawn, Sir Edward began. — “ You wonder, sir, at my
 “ particular, and perhaps unpolite, notice
 “ of you, but I was struck by your asto-
 “ nishing

“ nishing resemblance to an uncle whom
“ I have not heard of many years.”

Mr. Sloper betrayed evident marks of confusion, at the prospect of eclaircissement, by *him* clearly undesirable.—After much hesitation and several changes of countenance, he positively denied any knowledge of Sir Edward as a relative, at the same time observing, his *name* was an insuperable bar to any such claim; but Edward, transported at the idea, however improbable, that this man might be brother to his excellent mother, would not give up the ill-founded hope. Sloper motioned to return to the company, my husband reluctantly complied, after giving him a pressing invitation to Brenchley, which he coldly accepted.

If I read aright, Louisa, Mr. Sloper would feel no pleasure in the consanguinity of a *poor* baronet; and I am clear in this opinion, that wealth, grandeur, and the obsequious notice of surrounding flatterers,

flatterers, will ever possess the primary place in his heart.

Sir Edward insists upon the strong family-likeness he has discovered in the West-Indian, and seems secure in the certainty of recovering a relation he has long given up for lost. — But were it to prove so, and though nature might give a momentary alarm in favour of an only sister's son, yet riches alone can ensure the partiality of a man whose vast possessions stamp his importance, and whose laudable passions, I have reason to believe, are smothered by the weight of his bags. — A tear *may* start, sister, — the sudden ebullition of revived affection *may* overflow the banks of proud reservedness; — but throw dependent poverty's chilling water upon the swell, it speedily subsides, and avaricious prudence, (if I may connect the words,) keeps down the feelings of wealthy pride.

Lady WILMOT in continuation.

EDWARD has since acquainted me, there was a younger brother of his mother, whose misbehaviour induced his friends to send him abroad, and he owned, with some reluctance, that reports had since circulated much in his disfavour. Thus does my husband account for Sloper's change of name and taciturnity respecting his affinity to our family.—True, Louisa, but should this person be the identical uncle of Sir Edward, I can see no advantage arising to us. He may, notwithstanding Mrs. Saunders's hopes and Juvenal's fears, he *may* be married, — he may have children, — his estate is most likely acquired, consequently only personal, or perhaps entailed; and probably, after years of precarious hope, we shall find his fortune left to some needy sycophant, who will sooth his pride, and practice every effort of self-denial, merely to prove himself *worthy* the great planter's remembrance.

remembrance. It is easy to see, that the man who would preserve Mr. Sioper's good opinion, (or rather favour,) must sacrifice every idea of independence, and meanly cringe to obtain a partial distinction. Now, I am well aware that prisons, sickness, want, and even death, would be the choice of Edward Wilmot, rather than such a servile state. You will naturally ask, what can induce his condescension to Mr. *Ward*, which seems incompatible with such a sentiment. I have, in some measure, once before, accounted for the seeming paradox, but will now endeavour at a clearer solution.

My husband's disposition, you well know, is replete with grateful generosity. Half the evils we have suffered were brought on by this amiable weakness. Yet is his heart neither narrowed nor corrupted. Sensible of obligations he cannot lessen, and pleased with Ward's behaviour, which at this period appears like disin-

interested friendship, in forbearing to claim what Edward cannot at present return, he encourages hopes, the realising of which would invalidate Mrs. Tenby's testimony against this paltry fellow.

"Certainly," said Wilmot to me, but yesterday, "that man has great faults; he "is a *gamester*, and I fear one of those "wretched beings called free-thinkers.— "But in my case he has shewn the most "commendable forbearance, *therefore* is "my gratitude engaged to pardon what I "must still condemn."

You will easily perceive no such motives can actuate my husband's conduct in respect to Mr. Sloper; therefore, well I know, he will not stoop. Convince him that his generous principles shall not suffer, and you may do any thing with Edward Wilmot: but, should you point out emolument, attainable only by mean subterfuges, he will scorn the proposal and despise the proposer. To say I have lamented

lamented a connection, so evidently degrading,—so conspicuously dangerous,—would be but useless repetition;—indulge me, once for all, then, with observing, that, if, contrary to my own surmises, the late bishop's sternly indicated suspicion, and Mrs. Tenby's imperfect discoveries, this creature *yet* prove honest, then will I confess the weakness of prejudice, which has so long encouraged the most degrading notions in his disfavour.

Lady F. WILMOT in continuation.

May 19.

WE have enjoyed several days of uninterrupted tranquility. Free from the pedantic, and consequently disagreeable, Juvenal, the obstinately ignorant Mrs. Saunders, and her conceited niece: but the pleasing vacation is nearly expired, for we are threatened, this afternoon, with an inundation of company. — Added to which, we expect Mr.

K 3

Sloper

Sloper and our good-natured Ferguson, who is just arrived from Portugal.

A person who delights in odd characters might find much entertainment in a circle where each visitor's peculiarities are contrasted by its opposite. But *my* mind, Louisa, is too painfully engaged to discriminate, with spirit, their different propensities; however, in compliance to your wish, I will do my best.

Adieu, my dearest, I will soon write again.

F. WILMOT,

Lady F. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

Brenchley, May 21,

I AM unhappy, sister: I have witnessed a disagreeable *brûlée*, which my prognosticating feelings place in an uncomfortable light. I will give you the whole transaction as it happened.

Our expected visitors, whom I mentioned in my last, were tolerably cheerful
till

till Sloper's appearance, who came not till pretty late.

Juvenal, whose pride is nearly equal to that stately being's, (the difference lying only between riches and learning,) arose not at his entrance. The haughty planter cast looks of ineffable contempt upon the cynic, as he passed him. This supercilious treatment was immediately noticed by Juvenal, who raised his protuberant chest, and contracted a pair of scowling bushy eye-brows, loosening his enormous neckcloth, as if to give an easy passage to the passion which seemed struggling for utterance.

Ferguson, ever ready, whether right or wrong, to speak his sentiments, and having some small intimation of Sloper's consequence, humourously told the scholar,

"He ought to have lowered his top-
"sails at the sight of a loaded galleon."

“*Loaded* indeed,” said Juvenal, “but it is with pride, vanity, and ignorance.”

Mr. Sloper, touched to the quick at this unambiguous insinuation, turned fiercely round, “’Tis a pity,” retorted he, “that such as *thou* should’st be admitted into civil society, till good manners had cleansed the tarnish of college brutality.”

Sir Edward prevented any farther altercation, by making the best excuse for this offence that the case would admit; but the planter sat silent and uneasy, swelling with choler he chose not to unbosom, and colouring with indignation he endeavoured to suppress.

Mrs. Saunders sought to make *her* court to him, but she succeeded not; irritated at first by Juvenal’s farcastical reflections, his temper could not recover a pliable tone, and the lady’s strange-turned compliments were uttered in vain,

I was amazed at the bitterness these gentlemen expressed, till my loquacious visitor explained the cause, by informing me, in a low voice, that her niece had attracted Sloper's notice; Juvenal, to whom she has of late given some encouragement, being present when his rival spoke in favour of the young lady, took fire, — said she was engaged, — and made several cutting reflections upon his avarice, which I find is every where talked of. This produced a resolution on both sides to thwart each other on every possible occasion.

I now strove to give our conversation a more sprightly turn, but our good father, Ferguson, and my husband, only, would second my attempt.

Juvenal sat gloomy, spiteful, and looked as if meditating mischief, constantly opposing Mr. Sloper, if by chance he relaxed so far as to utter a few words, in answer to my officious questions; *his* mortified

tified pride and ill-founded jealousy were not to be removed by the aunt's ridiculous observations on her niece's bridling, tit-tering, and I may add, leering, attention.

"I cannot imagine," said Juvenal, fur-
lily, to Mrs. Saunders, "what can induce
"your tame servility to pompous worth-
"lessness."

"*Civility*, sir! I don't understand what
"you mean! Am I not to speak to that
"gentleman, because you are on your
"high ropes? But it is in vain to *seduce*
"you to reason."

Sloper, rising precipitately, his face
flaming with rage, asked Juvenal what he
meant by such insolence: the other, rising
also, pushed his adversary gently from
him, with silent disdain. This was
enough; the West-Indian forgot his *dig-
nity* and situation, and, regardless of the
company, aimed a violent blow at the
poor man, which struck him to the
ground;

ground; then, addressing himself to my husband,—

“ I am convinced your card of invitation was an affront, or you would not permit this treatment to a *gentleman* in your house; therefore I shall prevent the possibility of a repetition. — It is with pain I look upon that insulting wretch,” turning to his fallen enemy, who was trying to rise, seemingly in misery, his face disfigured, “ and shall never think of this transaction but as a disgrace to my honour.”

Ferguson, in the zeal of his heart for the abused Juvenal, whom he was assisting to rise, caught Sloper by the coat,— “ Come back,” said he, “ and let poor Juvenal take his revenge, if you think the blow he has received disgraces your mighty honour; come back, I say, I warrant his fist, or mine, if you like it better, shall return the compliment on your tawny chaps.”

My

My husband, forcibly extricated the half-frightened Sloper, and he made his escape with a velocity proportioned to the captain's boisterous address.

You may suppose mine and the ladies' confusion upon this occasion. — Mrs. Saunders was half out of a small window which looks into the yard, and exhibited a most risible appearance, her corpulence preventing her getting backwards or forwards.—Ferguson, spying the poor woman in this ludicrous situation, ran to her,

“Odso, madam, what stealing away
“without orders? Faith you are stuck in
“the gap, though.”

Terrified at his offer to deliver her, rather from affectation than delicacy, she held up one hand to prevent his approach, and, by so doing, lost her equilibrium, and had but just time to scream for that help she had before refused, when the unfortunate adventurer tipped over into a large cistern, which was nearly full of
water.

water. — Ferguson, followed by the company, hastened into the yard, and beheld (I fear with no small satisfaction) part of her head-dress floating on the top. We all attempted to assist her; but the captain, who, I believe, never disguises his feelings, roared out for a jack, ropes, and wind-lafs, swearing, the tackle of a first-rate would not be able to raise her: however, in the midst of *her* exclamations and *his* vociferous risibility, she was pulled out of her uncomfortable receptacle. — A dung-fork lying near, the delighted captain stuck it into her soaked cap, tête, &c. and bringing it to her, hallooed out, —

“ So, madam, here are some of your
 “ spoils; faith you must apply to your
 “ barber for a new wig:” and then burst
 into another fit of laughte, at her dismal
 appearance. “ Upon my soul, now, you
 “ put me in mind of a porpoise, rolling up
 “ and down before a storm, in that leaden
 “ convenience. But come haul her in,
 “ perhaps

“perhaps she may want new sheathing,
“after her hasty launch.”

Tormenting creature! His caution was necessary, for in the fall she had rubbed a large piece of skin from her elbow, but said it was “all owing to Mr. Sloper’s *irraschableness*.” — After taking every proper precaution to prevent cold, she left us, much mortified at the accident.

I was excessively vexed at some words the West-Indian let fall, as he passed John, who let him out, exclaiming, in a low muttering accent, — “This base affront I
“will not put up with.” Dear Louisa, he will not surely seek a recompence from my husband. Juvenal’s cowardice and abstracted way of thinking encourage not a suspicion that his antagonist can *call him* out. — Ferguson is too vulgar for the notice of so *great* a personage. — Whom then can he mean? — Wilmot laughs at my fears: he may, but they are not the less

less reasonable for that. — Indeed, I am unhappy, notwithstanding the apparent ease this letter is written with. — But you know I hold it as a fundamental principle, never, if possible, to consider the state of my own mind, if Louisa can be benefited or diverted by my communications; and this may account for the long epistles I have written when under evident distress: besides, I cannot properly describe occurrences which nearly concern my own affairs unless other particulars are explained, with which those *affairs* are more immediately connected. Another reason suggests itself, your present confinement with Lady O—— requires some variety of intelligence, to cheer your heavy hours. I shall, therefore, continue writing, unless prevented by some calamity yet more dreadful than I have experienced.

Our good father pines, I fancy, to return to his Gothic retirement. — He
seems

seems to expect another gouty fit, and wishes to perform the journey before the weather be too severe to permit his removal. But I say, No. Who so proper as his own child to nurse and soothe him? Crawford-Abbey, without Louisa, must be very dreary. While Edward possesses Brenchley, it is his father's home.—These arguments have induced the good old man to lay aside his intention, and he means not to quit Suffex till the harvest is over; we are then, my dear, to accompany him to the abbey and stay till better times.—I am yet convinced we shall enjoy the smiles of heaven, ought we not patiently to endure its awful frown?

Adieu, my kind and faithful sister.—Your little nephew is in charming health. Edward is in tolerable spirits, and, with our father and self, joins in every tender wish for dear Louisa's happiness.

FRANCES WILMOT.

JACOB

JACOB WARD to Sir EDWARD WILMOT.

Dyot-Street, May 24.

S I R,

I HAVE lost every farding of munny I had in the world. The rogues have strip'd me even of my vatch, and swares, if I don't produce 3000*l.* by saterday, they will arest me. Now what I begs is, that you will, by some means, make up that sum for me, vitch I vil rite off the note, othervays I must go to jale. And am, your honner's wery humble sarvant,

JACOB WARD.

Sir EDWARD WILMOT to JACOB WARD.

Brenchley, May 25.

I AM scarcely in my senses! — *Three Thousand Pounds!* When and where was this debt contracted? Are you *indeed* the villain I have been so much warned against? Distraction! It must be a slip of the pen! six hundred pounds I knew of, but you told me *that* note was paid away.

VOL. II.

L

And,

And, to strengthen my good opinion of you, said, I should not be troubled for it. — Confirm or revoke this cursed demand immediately. I sleep not till your answer reaches me.

EDWARD WILMOT.

Mr. WINDUS to Sir EDWARD WILMOT.

S I R,

May 28.

AM directed, by my client, Mr. Jacob Ward, to demand the sum of 6000*l.* for the payment of which you have given your note. Said note is in my hands. Please to inform me when you will discharge the debt, as said client expects an immediate settlement. — Am, sir, your most obedient,

ARTHUR WINDUS,

Lady F. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

Brenckley, May 25,

Five in the Morning.

I MUST write. It is a consolation in distress; an amusement in prosperity. And yet I can only conjecture.—Guess wrong perhaps.—Torment you and myself with apprehensions ill-founded or misapplied.

Louisa, my husband went yesterday to L——, and came not home till late; but *what* an alteration! He went to his bureau; — wrote a letter; — dispatched John with it; — walked backwards and forwards in the most violent agitation; — could not be spoken to; — begged I would favour him with my *silence*. Sister, my prattle gave offence. —

“Is the servant returned?” he asked; “but why that question? It is impossible”—I listened to these broken sentences in mute astonishment. At length,

L 2

“Forgive

“Forgive me, Frances,” he said,
 “your poor Edward is unhappy. — Pray
 “go to bed.”

Unhappy indeed, for the tears ran
 down his cheeks. I clasped my arms
 about him, and sobbed out, —

“Shall Wilmot be wretched and his
 “wife unconcerned? Shall her head
 “press the pillow of repose, while a
 “beloved husband vents his sorrow to
 “the silent night?”

“No more,” he cried, “thou best of
 “women, we will both retire.”

Our little innocent lay sleeping in the
 cradle; — he uncovered its sweet face,
 looked steadfastly on him, and, folding
 his uplifted hands, seemed to pray for
 heaven’s blessings on the babe. Then,
 speaking more articulately, but in a low
 voice, —

“Oh! that I was insensible as this
 “smiling infant; that my slumbers were
 “serene as his! — Though born to dis-

“tress,

“ tress, deprived of its natural right, and
“ the guiltless heir of evils it deserves not,
“ yet does he rest in peace. Safe and
“ nourishing be thy repose, thou child of
“ misfortune.” Then, stooping to kiss its
balmy lips, he turned aside with a fresh
burst of grief.

We retired, but oh! my God, what a
night! He sighed, groaned, and started,
incessantly.

Sister, I fear that wretch, Sloper, has
sent a challenge; else, why was John dis-
patched so late to L——? Why that
tender apostrophe to the slumbering angel?
— Generous noble Wilmot, must thou
hazard a life so precious, in compliance
with that most pernicious custom? — He
is going out, my sister, perhaps, to meet
the challenger. Well do I know his deli-
cate sense of honour, which will not per-
mit the slightest imputation of cowardice
to sully its purity. I will prevent him.
He stops at the stile and looks up. —

Seven in the Evening.

I flew down stairs. — Ran out of the house with neither hat nor cloak on. — He was at some small distance, walking slow and pensive. The sound of my feet caught his attention. And, turning hastily back, he received me almost breathless in his arms. I sunk upon the grass. The kindest of husbands sat down and supported his unhappy wife. The morning was damp; — the ground excessively dewy; — we thought not of it. How affectionately he kissed my tearful face, and, with the most soothing tenderness and softest expressions, entreated to know the cause of my terror! Recovering speech, I abruptly exclaimed, — (so much had the horrible suspicion possessed me,) —

“For the love of God, accept not the challenge. Do not fight with that madman.”

“What means my life?” he cried:
“Frances, thy senses are disordered.”

“I

“I know it, Wilmot; *well* I know it:
“but you must *not* fight. My little infant
“will want an adviser, and his miserable
“mother a fond companion.”

At that moment the most shocking ideas presented, and I beheld him bleeding beneath the hand of barbarous pride. — Suddenly rising and catching him by the arm, I would, had strength permitted, have dragged him to the house. —

“Why this unusual violence, dearest
“Fanny?”

“Go back with me; you shall not meet
“that wicked Sloper.”

“I *will* go back with you. I *will not*
“stir from my distressed love.”

“O then, you won’t leave the house to-
“day.”

“By no means. I will stay for ever with
“you.”

This promise cheered my sinking spirits, and he led me to our chamber with looks of unutterable affection, but re-

mained silent, his eyes expressing anxious curiosity, for I had no doubt but he guessed I was acquainted with the dreadful intelligence, though unable to learn by what busy person the news was brought. — A servant called him out. I would have spoken.

“Stop, my sweet girl,” said he, “you have not enough recovered to talk. I must leave you for some minutes, but, depend on this, your Edward is safe from every danger that can alarm his Frances.”

“No, no. Stay, I am better: but my heart is racked with apprehensions which your absence will encrease.”

“Great God!” he articulated, “why dost thou permit unhappiness to visit the bosom of innocence?”

Still, Louisa, here was no explanation. Still my heart bled from the supposition of danger. Indeed, I firmly believed, at that moment, his eagerness to leave me
arose

arose from the fear of leaving his honour impeached by neglecting his antagonist. My forward imagination made the servant's message to be a *second* call from Sloper; the first he most likely received when that shocking change took place in his behaviour. I kept in the room till our father entered the chamber. Shocked at my tears, he demanded, in a tremulous voice, the reason of my apparent uneasiness. Wilnot explained it, and solemnly insisted my fears were totally without foundation. They pressed me to lie down. I did, after engaging my father not to quit Sir Edward. I *did* lie down but could not sleep.

Sister, the pen cannot afford its usual relief, perhaps to-morrow I may be easier.

May 26. Four o'Clock.

I have left my bed to seek the sweet refreshment of a lovely morning.
It

It rises with uncommon splendor. The sun too, how glorious! my heart seems lighter. Your Frances is willing to indulge a hope that her ready fears may prove groundless. My father, last night, gave me his parole for Edward's safety; this looks well; I will take advantage of this charming day, and stroll among the opening sweets. Would to heaven Louisa was with me. The romantic walks about Brenchley would delight my sister.

Twelve at Noon.

I have rambled through the park, but it is already intensely hot. The clouds appear highly electrified. The suffocating air almost prevents respiration. Does the weather affect our ideas? Mine are not near so lively as they were in the forenoon. The rural scene which presents itself to your Fanny's undistinguishing eye is insufficient to banish her disagreeable reflections; they are again predominant.

Amazing,

Amazing, that the human mind should be so variable! I once thought envy a stranger to my bosom, and yet the sheep-shearers, who are collected in yonder park, for the purpose of celebrating their annual feast, excite a wish for their happy situation. They are to adjourn, at night, to a house in the neighbourhood, as it is the custom of the place, and conclude the shearing with mirth and festivity.

Nine o'Clock.

My husband went to L—, at noon, and is not yet returned. The evening closes with every appearance of a tempest. The lightning already plays about the horizon. I am dreadfully alarmed. It is nine o'clock, and no Sir Edward. Surely my parent would not suffer his beloved son to rush into danger.

A servant in Sloper's livery, and with a letter too. I *must* open it, my uneasy reflections may plead sufficient excuse.

RODOLPHUS

RODOLPHUS SLOPER, *Esq.* to Sir EDWARD
WILMOT.

IF Sir Edward Wilmot's courage be equal to his inhospitality he will not fail to meet the abused Mr. Sloper to-morrow morning by four o'clock. The choice of place and weapons is left to Sir Edward by the injured R. S.

Lady F. WILMOT in continuation.

FORTITUDE, patience, equanimity, are no more. Various have been my trials, and heaven has known my submission to them. But this dreaded confirmation of thy sister's fears bears hard upon her. While fluctuating between hope and despair, a gleam of comfort would intervene; that ray is totally darkened. But six hours only, — perhaps to night, for they may meet by accident. I have sent every domestic, even the day-labourers, to search for my husband. Ferguson joins in the hasty pursuit.

pursuit. Tremendous God! why must the good, the generous, the gentle, be put on a footing with ferocious cruelty? Why depends the welfare of an innocent family on skill or strength? And why must the misconceiving savage pride of a monster create such bitter distress? Hatredful custom. When will determined resolution destroy a practice so detestable? How many poor orphans will yet weep for its baneful effects?

Methinks I hear Sternheim below. Yes, he is detained by the gathering storm. Edward comes not. It grows late. The clock strikes twelve. How dismal it echoes among the caverns! I gasp for breath. They are certainly met. 'Tis very dark, Louisa. 'Tis midnight, and my husband not returned. Where am I? How it hails! The wind, too, roars among the aged trees. Perhaps, horrid thought! perhaps, the merciless hail is beating upon his murdered body. Oh! in
what

what unfrequented spot lies my dearest?
 Ha! how blue the lightning gleams a-
 gainst yon venerable tower! Thunder,
 too; what a crash! Should Sloper's
 sword have missed its bloody aim, the
 cruel elements may work his destruction.
 Another flash! O God of terror! The
 elm near my window is split into a thou-
 sand pieces. The glass shivers. I sicken,
 Louisa. My heart bursts.—

The Rev. Mr. JENKINS to Miss JENKINS.

SWEET creature! I will endeavour to
 add a few lines to her shocking letter.
 Oh! my child! her senses have given way
 to a temporary insanity. No wonder she
 should, at last, sink under a weight of af-
 fliction, so long, so patiently, indured.
 She raves, and what can an infirm aged
 man do to assist her?

The Rev. Mr. JENKINS in continuation.

May 27.

SHE begged, about nine last night, to be left alone, I gave reluctant permission. The splitting of the elm she mentions, induced me to go up. She sat, with her pen in her hand, her aspect frightfully wild. The glass, from her window, scattered about the floor; some of it absolutely melted. I spoke to her, she started up, and, looking furiously at me,—

“Where is your parole? Where is my
“Edward? You have deceived a miser-
“able wife. I would have kept him
“from evil: but, depending on a good
“man’s promise, I let him go. How
“could you take him from me? I will
“go to L——.”

She rushed down stairs. We confined her with some difficulty. Sternheim was there.

“Go

“Go to bed, old man,” she said, t“ he
“thunder may affect your debilitated
“body. Go to bed, you cannot lose
“another partner. Yet, stay and weep,
“with me, for Edward and Matilda.”

The soldier bathed her hand with tears.
I sobbed in bitter anguish. She noticed
it, poor thing, and hung about my neck.

“Oh father, Edward loved you dearly;
“but he is quite gone.”

A loud knocking alarmed us all.
She flew into the hall, and opened
the door before any one could prevent
her. A man, almost drowned in rain,
gave her a letter. Without looking at
the direction, she put it into my hand,
and, before I could open it, said, “Is he
“not dead?” Her strength then suddenly
failing, she fell against the wainscot. But,
my dear, her fears are groundless, he is
alive. Unhappy Wilmot! thou art, at
last, undeceived. Ward, that detestable
reptile, has arrested him for 6000*l*. I
told

told the dear girl of his fate, she started from the sofa, on which we had placed her, and, sinking on the floor, raised her hands in grateful, but silent, adoration. She could not stand, and was easily persuaded to go to bed. Her senses are this morning sufficiently clear; but a shivering-fit seems to indicate a fever.

Ferguson is gone to L——: perhaps, by the time he returns, my precious girl may have taken some repose. God bless my dear Louisa. I have written this in pain; but could not leave you in that cruel uncertainty your poor sister's fears must have occasioned.

SAMUEL JENKINS.

Lady F. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

June 16, from our prison at L—.

YES, Louisa, your dear brother *is* alive, and I am better.—Wonder not at the date of this epistle, nor let it surprize you to hear your poor Fanny is an inmate

of a prison, since she is the comforter, the consoler, of an injured husband.

I have a long and painful story to relate. You will pity, you will weep for me. I will allow you to weep. My Louisa's sensibility has been deeply wounded by the recital of her sister's sufferings; but, oh! my dearest, what would those sufferings have been, had Wilmot seen that dreadful challenge? Ten thousand times more poignant.—Ferguson has had an interview with Sloper: he haughtily avowed himself the author of that alarming note.

“I expected,” said he, “to have seen Sir Edward Wilmot, or to have received his apology, for not meeting an insulted gentleman, before he was confined.”

The captain explained, in a few words, the cause of my husband's silence. Mr. Sloper's high-raised features relaxed, when he was informed of the consequence of his hot-brained behaviour; assuring Ferguson,

son, he meant not to distress a *woman*; it was clearly against his mode of proceeding; therefore Lady Wilnot need not be under any future apprehensions on his account, especially as Juvenal had made proper concessions.

It must be our business to keep the whole transaction a secret from Edward. I shall now endeavour to give you a clear idea of our situation, from the day your brother left Brenchley. That afternoon he drank tea with Mrs. Saunders, and then called at the post-house, in consequence of his expectation to hear from that horrid monster, Jacob Ward. About eight in the evening he went to the inn for his horse. Going through the yard, he observed three men talking together: they followed him into a parlour, where the landlord was busy, who asked what they wanted.

"Nothing with *you*," said one of them furlily; "we want this here gentleman.

M 2

"Come,

"Come, Sir, you must go with us."

"*Must* go," said poor Wilmot; "this is strange language."

"No matter for the language; you can't say but we *gives* you civil language.—But the short and the long is *this*, we have a writ against your honour, at the suit of one 'squire Ward; so it signifies nothing boggling."

"Ward!—impossible!"

"It may be impossible; but it's very true, for all that."

"You look very pale, Sir," observed the humane landlord; "pray sit down."

"—Sally, bring a glass of brandy directly. God bless me! his honour will fall."

"Let me alone, Mr. Green," said the dear astonished Wilmot, "I am better;" and he wiped the cold sweat from his face.

"This act of violence was unexpected;—

"but come, gentlemen, lead on."—After the *gentlemen* had taken several bumpers of brandy, they led him, *sister*, to the
house

house of a bailiff. Immediately, almost, he recollected his unhappy Frances, and called for writing materials; but, notwithstanding his most pressing intreaties, no person could be found to carry the letter, when finished. — “ It was late. It was stormy.—Cou’dn’t his honour wait till morning.—One night could break no squares.”

My husband was almost frantic;—offered a large gratuity.—At last, tempted by the valuable consideration, a man was found who agreed to deliver it; and accordingly arrived at Brenchly about four in the morning.

On the 30th a lawyer came to L——, deputed by the wicked cause of all this misery. The man understood his lesson.

“ Should not have arrested Sir Edward till the second letter was answered; but the bailiff mistook his orders.”—Then he pleaded Ward’s necessities, as an excuse for such vileness.—“ Was certain his

“honour might expect every advantage
“the case would allow, as his client ex-
“pressed the greatest friendship for Sir
“Edward Wilmot, as well as reluctance
“in taking a step which his wants ren-
“dered justifiable.”

I have scarcely patience to relate his infamous falsehoods. My husband would not speak.—The lawyer went on.—

“Had Sir Edward no friend who
“would advance half the sum, and be
“bound for the rest?—Indeed, a thought
“had just struck him.—Could 500 l. be
“immediately procured, and a fresh note
“given for the rest, payable in three
“months, he would endeavour to gain
“his client’s concurrence to this propo-
“sal, though he had not been commis-
“sioned to make the offer.”

Edward listened steadily to this studied harangue. At length, breaking silence, he said, in a solemn tone, “The wretch,
“who can treacherously delude his un-
“suspectin

"suspecting friend" into a fixed opinion of
 "his generosity;—who can basely, with-
 "out previous notice of his intentions,
 "drag *that* friend from his innocent fa-
 "mily and peaceful home, and subject
 "him to the keenest distress;—will stick
 "at no means, however diabolical, to ef-
 "fect his deep-laid scheme."

"Dear Sir," said the fawning lawyer,
 "you talk very wide of the point I was
 "urging."

"Interrupt me not. My inference is,
 "that your last proposal is made in con-
 "sequence of the illegality of Ward's de-
 "mand. The pernicious effect of an act
 "of parliament, to me most ruinous, pre-
 "vents my application for justice. —
 "Trusting in that fellow's singleness of
 "heart, I neglected taking receipts on
 "stamped paper, and can therefore make
 "no appeal."

The man looked surprised, as though unacquainted with this bare-faced wickedness.—My husband proceeded.

“And now, Sir, you may carry my
“determination.—If, conscious of his un-
“precedented villainy, Mr. Ward will ac-
“knowledge the receipts in my hands to
“be legal, I will summon my friends,
“and doubt not, with their assistance, of
“discharging the debt I *really* owe. But,
“if he persist in his villainy, I will pine
“in a dungeon,—submit to the most me-
“nial offices,—even see the woman I
“adore reduced to a state equal with me,
“when so degraded,—rather than tacitly
“comply with his request.”

The lawyer would have spoken.

“I’ll hear no more,” said Sir Edward;
“nor will accede to any terms but those
“just mentioned. Let him do his worst;
“I can but change one prison for an-
“other.”

Mr.

Mr. Windus then retired, evidently disappointed at the issue of his visit.

On the 4th of this month the bailiff carried my husband a bill of expences;—
 “hoped his honour wou’dn’t be angry;
 “but, as there was an order for him to go
 “to gaol, thought as how he wou’dn’t
 “chuse to leave such trifles unpaid.”

The dear Wilmot, disdaining altercation, settled the account, and was that evening conducted to the threatened confinement. Six days, accompanied only by the faithful Ferguson, and visited by our kind parent, did he endure the horrors of a town-gaol. On the 7th, in compliance with my almost frantic intreaties, my father conducted me thither. The dark, dirty, winding, passages; the rude, dissonant voices that resounded on every side; the harsh and ill-boding countenances of those men they call turnkeys; overcame not my fortitude. With a tolerable steady step I advanced up one flight of stairs,

to

to the apartment which contained my soul's delight. Our conductor pointed to a door, in which was a small grated wicket, and then left us. — We tapped gently: Ferguson came to us, with pity and reverence struggling in his honest face; begging, in a low whisper, we would go in softly, as poor Sir Edward was just turned-in.

Now, Louisa, let your tender feelings paint a scene, which, I trust, will never be repeated. Now let your tearful eye follow a fond distressed wife to the chamber of an imprisoned husband. Imprisoned falsely by the man, who, long before, had led him, by secret machinations, to his ruin. Figure to yourself a room gloomy, though decent. View the strong double-barred window. Turn your attention to an old half-tester harrateen bed, on which, in all the bitterness of sorrow, behold the once gay spirited Wilmot, with eyes half-closed, not able to retain

tain the trickling tear within the swollen lids!—His hair entangled, and spreading carelessly over his colourless cheeks!—So deep was his dejection as to occasion a neglect of the most necessary duties of cleanliness!—Was *this* a scene for the woman who had just risen from a sick bed? Was *this* a cure for the torturing pains that had so long worried my mind? No.—I tottered;—fell against my venerable companion, who tenderly supported me to the hapless prisoner. He started off the bed,—caught me to his bosom,—and looked round, as if fearful I should be still more shocked at the mean accommodation. — I strove to recover my spirits, endeavoured to cough away my emotion, and tried to speak; but it would not do. We then sat down, and enjoyed the painful luxury of unrestrained grief! our poor father completing the melancholy trio! Ferguson was busy in setting the mean apartment in order; and, in the most humane

mane and friendly manner, attempted to divert, what could not be cured, by his droll and good-humoured expressions. They had the wished-for effect, and I beheld with tolerable calmness the little manœuvres he practised to give the place a comfortable appearance. I have now an opportunity to send this letter, which has been begun several days. I will soon begin another. Adieu, dear Louisa :—a father's kindest blessing, added to our sincerest love, attend you.

F. WILMOT.

Lady F. WILMOT to Miss JENKINS.

July 1.

I Have sufficient time to write, in our dreary prison, and therefore shall continue my communications.

When we were somewhat composed, I determined to send for necessaries from Brenchley, our sweet infant, and one servant. My husband seems happy to contemplate

plate my resignation; but I can perceive it is with difficulty he can restrain his tears, when fondling his pretty Edward. Ferguson makes an excellent nurse, as well as a comforter. Good creature! he has already made offers to the amount almost of his little fortune. Our parent, too, would even reduce his moderate allowance to assist us. Could Sir Edward be persuaded to accept the bounty of his friends, means might yet be set on foot for his deliverance; but he is determined against any method of relief, till conviction, or some unexpected means, shall force our persecutor to do an act of justice. Who can but approve, though all must lament, a conduct so noble, so disinterested? Though hope has nearly deserted us, who, in many painful situations, have been cheered by her benevolent smiles, yet are we not despairing. Submission, patience, fortitude,—in one word, *Christianity*,—supports its humble professors. And, indeed,

indeed, most necessary is such assistance, while evils daily accumulate. Sir Richard Risdale has heard of our misfortune, and sends the comfortable intelligence, that, as we have not paid the rent he was to receive quarterly, he means to take the estate into his own hands. But it is a mistake, sister; there was no such agreement. However, I hear he has the meanness to expect the rent from the time we entered upon the premises. Surely, heaven will raise some one who will see an injured couple righted. I intend not to acquaint my husband with this additional vexation: it can answer no end but to dispirit him still more; and he seems, at times, to be really calm, and quite attentive to our father's consolatory arguments. He listens with such satisfaction to the pure effusions of cheerful piety, that I am unwilling to plunge him again into misery.

Well,

Well, Louisa, could you have supposed your sister possessed not twenty shillings of her own? Could you have gathered the truth of her situation from this serene epistle? Perhaps not; but it is a fact. However, do not imagine we can suffer pecuniary wants, while assisted and daily visited by our tender father. It is necessary to tell you, that my husband has discharged every thing we owed in this part of the world. No wonder, then, we have nothing left.—

What is this?—A letter from Ward!—I tremble with indignation. Poor, illiterate, groveling, fellow! Observe his style, orthography, and above all the *subject*.

JACOB WARD to Sir EDWARD WILMOT.

S I R,

MY laywer says you will not treat upon any terms but sich as I cant grant. I think he made you a very fare purposal. Its very odd you should deny
the

the dett.—If you have been base enuff to forge my name to your recetes, the act of parliament vill bring me off, as youve own'd they are not on stamp'd paper. However, as I am still your *friend*, if you will pay me 700 *l.* and give me a note for 700 *l.* more, I will give you a proper recete, and vithdraw my clame, and ham your humble servant, J. WARD.

In Continuation.

My husband resolves not to notice this letter.—He thinks, if Lord D— were in England, something might be done, as he clearly recollects paying some of the money in his Lordship's presence. But this cannot be, as business detains him in France, and we do not choose to inform him of this terrible event. F. W.



END OF VOL. II.

